HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, FEBRUARY 25, 1987

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CONTENTS

Page

Hearing held in Washington, DC, February 25, 1987 1

Statement of:

Barwinski, Sara L., A.C.S.W., advocacy facilitator, Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri 49

Benker, Karen E., M.D., former director, New York City Department of Health, Program for Homeless Families 53

Bode, John W., Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, accompanied by Bonnie O'Neill, Food and Nutrition Service 29

Foley, Hon. Thomas S., a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington 26

Hershkoff, Helen, attorney, the Legal Aid Society of New York 56

Jones, Nancy, homeless parent, accompanied by her 7-year-old son, Damien, St. Louis, Mo 5

Leland, Hon. Mickey, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, opening statement of 1

Panetta, Hon. Leon E., a Representative in Congress from the State of California, opening statement of 4

Roukema, Hon. Marge, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey, opening statement of 3

Prepared statements, letters, supplemental material, et cetera:

"A Study of Homelessness and Mental Illness in the Skid Row Area of Los Angeles," Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, March 1986, excerpt for the record 84

Barwinski, Sara L., A.C.S.W., advocacy facilitator, Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri and chairperson, Hunger Task Force, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, on behalf of the National Anti-Hunger Coalition:

Prepared statement of 109

Responses to questions submitted by Hon. Mickey Leland 52

Benker, Karen E., M.D., former director, New York City Department of Health, Program for Homeless Families:

Nutritional patterns in families in a welfare hotel, New York City Department of Health, Family Shelter Health Program, September 1984 118

Prepared statement of 114

Responses to questions submitted by Hon. Mickey Leland 55

Bode, John W., Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture:

Prepared statement of 98

Responses to questions submitted by Hon. Mickey Leland 31

Foley, Hon. Thomas, S., a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, prepared statement of 96

Gilman, Hon. Benjamin A., a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, February 4, 1987, prepared statement of 90

Hardy, Dorcas R., Commissioner of Social Security:

Letter to Chairman Leland, dated April 24, 1987, enclosing responses to written questions 168

Prepared statement of 155

Prepared statements, letters, supplemental material, et cetera—Continued
Hershkoff, Helen, attorney, the Legal Aid Society of New York:
"Characteristics and Use of Conventional Benefits by Users of Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries," New York City Human Resources Administration, October 1986 ..... Page 134
Prepared statement of 126
Responses to questions submitted by Hon. Mickey Leland 59
"Homeless Face Barriers in Applying for Food Stamps," Hunger Report, Select Committee on Hunger 82
Homelessness fact sheet, Select Committee on Hunger, February 1987 77
"Hunger Among the Homeless: A Survey of 140 Shelters, Food Stamp Participation and Recommendations," summary, Select Committee on Hunger 71
Jones, Nancy, homeless parent, accompanied by her 7-year-old son, Damien, St. Louis, Mo.:
Damien, prepared statement of 94
Response to question submitted by Hon. Marge Roukema 8

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1987

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:15 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Mickey Leland, (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Panetta, Kostmayer, Dorgan, Carr, Penny, Ackerman, Espy, Flake, Bilbray, Mfume, Roukema, and Gilman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MICKEY LELAND, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Chairman LELAND. We want to begin with opening statements. And hopefully, by the time we finish, we will have a quorum to take care of some of the committee's business.

I want to welcome everyone to the select committee's first hearing for the 100th Congress.

During the 99th Congress, select committee members visited private voluntary feeding establishments and homeless shelters in San Francisco, New York, Houston, and Washington, DC. Service providers consistently informed the committee of their inability to feed the increasing numbers of those in need. This morning, we will continue our investigations of solutions to hunger among the homeless—a population group for whom access to adequate nutrition is a particular hardship.

Since 1983, in metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas around the country, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of homeless persons. For families with children the situation is most severe. From 1985 to 1986 alone, the U.S. Conference of Mayors reported an average increase of 22 percent in the number of families with children seeking emergency shelter. During this same period, emergency food providers in over one-half of the cities surveyed were forced to turn away people in need of assistance.

Today, the select committee is releasing a report entitled, "Hunger Among the Homeless, A Survey of 140 Shelters, Food Stamp Participation, and Recommendations." Its findings are derived from the existing research literature on homelessness and responses to a select committee questionnaire from shelter managers across the Nation.

This report confirms that the majority of the homeless depend on the private sector for food assistance; yet it also demonstrates that private organizations are not able to keep pace with the growing

need. Fifty-two percent of the shelters surveyed do not provide two main meals daily. Typically, the homeless must seek out food in soup kitchens when they are accessible from dumpsters and other free food sites.

Food stamps are a major potential source of food aid for the homeless. Although the Food Security Act of 1985 directed state agencies administering the Food Stamp Program to provide a method of certifying and issuing coupons to eligible homeless households, our survey responses reveal that 45 percent of the homeless are not receiving food stamps, though the shelter managers state that they are eligible. They report that the numerous documentation papers required for the food stamp application process, such as proof of residence and income, birth certificates or Social Security cards and rent records, pose the greatest barriers to participation for the homeless.

For those homeless persons who do receive food stamps, more than two-thirds were reported to experience lengthy delays between the time they apply for food stamps and actually receive benefits—placing these households at risk of hunger while they await benefits.

As a result of the findings from the select committee hearings, last year I introduced comprehensive legislation entitled, The Homeless Persons Survival Act of 1986, addressing the complex emergency needs of the homeless and setting into place a realistic plan for preventive measures and long-term solutions. Several provisions of this bill were enacted last October as part of the omnibus drug bill. Two of these provisions amended the food stamp statute to improve its accessibility and effectiveness for the homeless.

Earlier this year, I reintroduced the Homeless Persons Survival Act, H.R. 286. Additionally, along with Congressman Panetta, I introduced H.R. 177, The Food Assistance for the Homeless Act of 1987. This legislation is on a fast track with H.R. 558, The Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act, with mark-up scheduled in the full Agriculture Committee this afternoon and a vote on the House floor expected by March 4. Its provisions would significantly improve the effectiveness of the Food Stamp and Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Programs for homeless persons and those low-income households at risk of homelessness due to high shelter costs.

I welcome our distinguished witnesses this morning who have directly experienced the hardships of feeding homeless families and those who have gained insight into the problems of the homeless through case work, program planning or litigation. I would like to encourage your comments on the legislation passed last year in the drug bill as well as the food stamp provisions under consideration in H.R. 177. I also welcome your recommendations to further improve the accessibility of the Federal food assistance program for the homeless and the hidden homeless who are doubled up in the homes of siblings or relatives.

Let me now yield to the ranking minority member of the House Select Committee on Hunger, Mrs. Roukema from New Jersey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARGE ROUKEMA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, there is no question but that we are facing a long-term problem with respect to homelessness. It's no longer a short-term emergency situation affecting only single males suffering from alcoholism which has been the popular perception.

But we now have a situation which also involves children and families and which is going to be with us for awhile.

This committee, under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, has taken a responsible approach to the dilemma. We held hearings on the matter last year and the committee has produced the report that we are about to adopt later this morning.

I might note also that, although I might not be able to be with you the whole hearing, the minority will be submitting additional views to the report adopted. There are no fundamental disagreements but we do have additional views.

Our first witness here today was to be the Majority Leader whom I understand will be here with us later. And if I am absent when he does appear, I do want to commend him now for his leadership on H.R. 558, The Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act.

As a member of the Housing Subcommittee of the full Banking Committee, I am a cosponsor of the gentleman's legislation and was pleased to participate in the mark up. The full committee mark up is being taken up this afternoon in the Banking Committee and, I understand, will be brought to the floor by the leadership on March 4.

I want to commend the gentleman from Washington for his leadership on this issue.

I also understand that another distinguished member of our panel, Mr. Panetta, has taken leadership and marked up H.R. 177, Food Assistance for the Homeless Act, another important addition to our frontal attack on this issue.

I would like to stress, however, that we are going to have to be realistic and recognize that these are only going to be first steps. Unfortunately, the matter will be with us next year and the year after that.

We should spend our time looking for solutions. But I am also required to note, and some of you have heard this from me before but it bears repeating, that some of the failures of this situation have been notably a failure of policy of the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill.

All levels of government, but chiefly State and local communities, have failed to provide the kind of community-based facilities which were needed to deal with these people. This abdication of responsibility is, in my opinion, an outrage.

If the Federal Government must now act, and we may have to, the record should clearly reflect that we are cleaning up someone else's mess.

There are many Governors and local officials who should be called upon to explain themselves in their policy failures.

If our work on this subject so far has shown anything, it is that homelessness is a complex problem and it has many dimensions.

This committee has made a good start. However, there is much that we still do not understand about hunger and the problem of homelessness.

We need a responsible and professional approach. And I pledge my cooperation, Mr. Chairman, to continue the Committee work and study on this issue.

Chairman LELAND. I thank the gentlelady.

The Chair would like to yield now to the gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta, the chairman of the Domestic Task Force and chairman of the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition of the Committee on Agriculture.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. LEON E. PANETTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I think it's well that you continue to emphasize the concerns about what's happening on the homeless front. This is a very tragic situation. Anyone who looks at the number and looks at the statistics that are coming in from the Conference of Mayors, Governors, various groups, they're looking at this issue and know that we're dealing with the national shame.

It is a complex problem. I don't think anybody ought to assume that no matter what we pass in these next few days is going to solve what is a very complex problem. It's a problem that is made up, in part, of deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. It's in part due to the cutbacks, severe cutbacks, in housing programs since 1981.

It's due to substance abuse, both drugs and alcohol, that impact on the homeless. It's due to the breakup of families, the increasing number of single-parent families. It's due to cutbacks in nutrition programs and other benefits that also have taken place over the last few years, all of those factors have contributed to the growing problem of homelessness.

And what we try to do, in the urgent relief bill that's coming up in the next few days, is perhaps to throw a few lifesavers out there in what is a very darkened sea of homelessness and try to provide at least some help.

Yesterday, we marked up in the subcommittee and today in the full committee we're trying to move out a bill that deals with nutritional help, to try to provide some outreach to those who are in shelters to let them know what their benefits could be.

To try to increase the shelter deductions so that we can try to prevent homelessness, particularly for those that are on food stamps. We try to deal with the welfare hotel situation in which people who are living in welfare hotels wind up losing their food stamps, and try to rectify that inequity.

We also have a provision now to provide for increased distribution of surpluses to those States in particular need as a result of homelessness. And we've reauthorized the TEFAB Program which is the temporary emergency distribution of surplus program which is extremely important to food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters that make use of those surpluses.

So all of those pieces are part of this urgent relief bill. And I feel, because we do have bipartisan support, I have the ranking support of my ranking Member, Mr. Emerson, on the subcommittee who is also my ranking Member on the task force, is working with me on this legislation.

I'm confident we will get this out. But I want to assure you again that assuming we get it past the House and the Senate and signed by the President, that this is just a small piece of trying to provide some quick relief to what is a very large and complex problem in our society. And it will have to be addressed hopefully in more comprehensive legislation later.

This is a good first step. And probably the most important part of this first step is making the public aware of how serious a problem the homeless are in this society.

Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you.

The Chair would like to yield to any of the other members who might have an opening statement.

[No response.]

Chairman LELAND. We were hopeful to get a quorum in order to pass the report this morning. Rather than keep our witnesses waiting in abeyance, we should indeed proceed with the hearing.

And at the time that we get a quorum, we will then take up the report.

I would like to announce at this time that the Majority Leader, Tom Foley, who will be testifying this morning, had an important engagement and will be joining us in a just a little while.

As soon as he arrives, we will bring him forward to testify.

I'd like to first introduce Ms. Nancy Jones and her son Damien. They have come from St. Louis, MO. to testify about their life circumstances.

It is my understanding that Ms. Jones has three children: a boy age 3, a girl age 5, and a boy age 7. I also want to express my thanks to Damien, the oldest, who came with his mother today to tell us about some of his experiences since he lost his home.

Ms. Jones has been homeless and unemployed since last spring.

Would you please come forward? You may sit at the witness table there.

We know this is very difficult for you to do. We would like you to feel at ease and to tell you that your appearance here is going to be most helpful in our proceedings to try to remedy this very serious crisis in our country.

We thank you very, very much for your participation.

STATEMENT OF NANCY JONES, HOMELESS PARENT, ACCOMPANIED BY HER 7-YEAR-OLD SON, DAMIEN, ST. LOUIS, MO

Ms. JONES. OK. The first thing I want to speak of, if it's OK, I want to explain how I got in the shelter.

I was staying in an apartment complex in which my landlord—my apartment—just a moment.

OK. I was staying in the apartment complex in which my toilet had fell down. So my landlord would never fix the apartment. So I

called so many different people trying to—which I stayed in housing authority which was low-income housing.

So I went through so many difficult changes on trying to get the toilet fixed. OK. Then I called so many different people trying to, like, Urban League, and AFDC, and different people that would probably get the housing authority to help me to get the toilet fixed correctly.

So I never did get that done. To make a long story short, I called the health department. And 10 days after that, I got an eviction—a termination. My landlord told me I went over her head, that I should have dealt with her more one on one.

But she never did, you know, cooperate and I was without my bathroom use for a little while. So anyway, I moved with my mother, and which my mother had 10 kids. And then I had 3, and that made 13 people in the household.

So I lost my food stamps. Things went bad there. So I had to move from there. So then I moved to a shelter. And so I really lost all benefits. So I went to the AFDC and tried to get them—I got my check back going. The lady told me, the caseworker told me the only way that I would be able to get some help from them is I had to stay in the shelter.

I couldn't stay over 3 months. After 3 months all sources would stop for the simple reason you can only stay in the shelter 3 months. The shelter that I'm in is a winter shelter. It closes March the 30th. All right?

And so I went—I tried to apply for food stamps and she tells me that she can't give me nothing guaranteed. But I see a couple of other people in there receiving them. All right.

The food that I get—when I get over there in the morning, now Damien and my daughter, Shay, they go to school. Half of the time, the transportation tells me that shelters are second, schools are first.

So I went through trying to get my kids—I have to catch the bus at 6 o'clock in the morning and take my other two kids to school. Then me and my youngest little boy, we go back down to the shelter. By the time I make it to the shelter there is no breakfast. The breakfast—the type of breakfast they give is like snacks. And the only nutritious thing out of the breakfast might be orange juice or milk. You know.

OK. From there, it's all kind of people. You know, we have kids around and they're in there around all kinds of people that's homeless. But you have people that have some real problems. You have kids walking around crazy people. You have to watch your kids, you have to keep up with your clothing.

And it's no cabinets to make space to keep your things there. They won't give me no type of assistance. My case-worker tells me she talks to her supervisor, she goes and talks to her supervisor. And she tells me, this has been about 30 days ago, that they can't promise me anything.

You know, all she can do is try to—that by shelters giving you three meals a day that you can't receive food stamps. So, you know, it's just like a circle like thing.

I went through and tried to get section 8. The only way now, they cut the section 8 program so bad to where you have to be an

abused parent before they can help you. I went to the AFDC building to talk to them. They referred me back to the human development.

They tell me, You have to be a child abused parent to get help. So it's like a circle. You know, every way that you try to go and try to get up on your feet, you come back to the end.

Time is running out at the shelter that I'm at. I can't get no type of assistance. I have to pick my kids up from school. Half of the time when they make it to the shelter it's like 5 o'clock. OK. Lunch is served—I mean dinner is served at 4:30. They miss that.

Then I have to go spend money. How can you save money? You're getting $327 a month for three kids. You're staying in the shelter. How can you save money? But you've got to buy food. The food is not right. My kids are used to three meals a day, eating correctly.

They're not used to being around all kinds of strange people. I've never, never been around people with lice and different things like that. I think—I'm not saying that everybody shouldn't be there, but shelters should kind of be like, as far as, like, children, people like children in one place and people that don't have children should be in another place.

It's strange, you know. It's a lot of weird people walking around. There's not enough food. The cooks that cook the food, they're underpaid so they come in with the attitude, you know, They're just the homeless. The things that they cook don't be sufficient.

The AFDC people won't give you no type of assistance. They tell you you're in the shelter and you've got 90 days to get out of the shelter or less the check would automatically stop.

So I've just been trying to, you know, find a job and go on, which I have a high school diploma, and things like that. And I might be young and have three kids but I don't give up. You know, I constantly keep on going. It's so many things I haven't said that I wanted to say. But it's kind of hard, you know, to just sit up and tell a lot of people about how you're living and it's not the normal way.

So it kind of bothers me a little bit. And my kids see all kinds of people, and people walk around with sores, and fleas, and germs. And you have to—you know, but you've got to cope with it because you have nowhere else to go.

If you go somewhere else—if I go stay with my mother, I get no assistance. My mother, she has a very good job. She won't deal with it. She won't give me her check stubs to take down there.

So if I stay with her I have no income. If I get a job making minimum wage, which is hard to find, if I get a job, OK, all my assistance stops. If I'm making $3.35, how can I pay rent? Making $3.35 and working 40 hours a week plus a baby sitter.

So either way—any kind of way you try to fall in this system dealing with AFDC, or anything, if you don't have a job making $7 or $8 an hour, you would not make it. If you get a job making $3, $4, or $5 an hour, then all the AFDC stops.

The food stamps, if you stay with a relative like a sister or a mother, that stops. You know, how can you save to get somewhere when you've got to eat everyday. You've got to dress kids, clothe them, different things. It's just hard, you know.

I have went to a lot of different things in trying to get help and I look for a job a lot. I work voluntarily in the shelters in trying to help. But it seems like every way that you go you still come into—when the deal goes down you've got to deal with AFDC.

With food stamps, there's no—you know, you don't get any shelter. And that's something that you can have because a lot of people who are in there, just because they're homeless, they still might have a family member they might be able to maybe cook things over their house.

But the caseworkers don't understand that, you know. I think they understand. But as far as their job, and things, they just won't—you're just not eligible.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you very much, Ms. Jones.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION FOR NANCY JONES

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

Question. Have you been married and does the father of your children contribute to the support of the children?

Answer. I have not been married. Damien's father pays $50 child support, though this goes to the welfare office and it is included in my ADC check of $327. I do not receive any child support from the father of my other two children. I have provided information about him to the welfare office.

[The prepared statement of Damien appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 94.]

Chairman LELAND. Let's talk to Damien just a bit if we can.

Damien, would you like to move closer to your mom so that you can be by the microphones? Do you want to tell us about how much food you get to eat and your experience at the shelter where you live?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Chairman LELAND. Do you think you get enough food to eat?

DAMIEN. No, no, no, no. All the food end up—and there's some people who have some things going all the way around her and they stick it into their jaw. And I only play with my sister and brother. That's all.

Chairman LELAND. Damien, do you like milk?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Chairman LELAND. Do you get a lot of milk at the shelter?

DAMIEN. Yes, if you want it.

Chairman LELAND. Mrs. Jones, you were working at one time. Is that correct?

Ms. JONES. Yes, I was.

Chairman LELAND. Full time?

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Chairman LELAND. For how long were you working?

Ms. JONES. I think I worked there about a year.

Chairman LELAND. Where were you working?

Ms. JONES. I was working at Northland Village, old De Pauls Hospital at 2415 North Kings Highway.

Chairman LELAND. What was your job?

Ms. JONES. I was a diet clerk.

Chairman LELAND. A diet clerk?

Ms. JONES. Yes. But the administration, they failed so many codes in the building. So the administration came and the State

took over the building. So they brought a lot of their people in. So a lot of us lost our jobs.

But they did give us an opportunity there that once the building, and everything gets back together, they will give us a chance on, you know, getting our jobs back. But it's just in the meantime.

Chairman LELAND. So you're hopeful that you will get your job back.

Ms. JONES. That I'll get my job back.

Chairman LELAND. How long has it been since you lost your job?

Ms. JONES. It's been a year now.

Chairman LELAND. A year?

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Chairman LELAND. You are still hopeful that you're going to get your job back?

Ms. JONES. Yes. Well, I have talked to several people. And, you know, they give me job recommendations to go other places. And they have also sent me to other nursing homes.

So once I get settled, I have a job lined up which Sister Rosemarie, that works in the shelter, but it's like I have to get me an apartment and get a little settled first. So, you know, I can get my kids to a baby sitter.

Chairman LELAND. Does that job pay more than minimum wage?

Ms. JONES. No. That job—well, a dime more, $3.45.

Chairman LELAND. I see.

Ms. JONES. You know. So, you know, it's a job. Anything beats nothing. But it's just the idea when you accept jobs like that, that the assistance, any type of assistance that you have only lasts for a certain period of time.

Chairman LELAND. I understand. It sounds as if you want very much to work and to be able to become independent?

Ms. JONES. Right. Very independent.

Chairman LELAND. And get off welfare.

Ms. JONES. Yes. And go on with my—I'm going to go back to school, which I fix hair. And going through school I fixed hair and doing things like that. I'm going to be up here real soon taking my test.

It's up here in Jefferson City to get my cosmetology license. So, you know, one day I'll be back up here for my—because I don't give up. You know, I keep going.

Chairman LELAND. Well, I certainly hope you don't give up.

Ms. JONES. Oh, no.

Chairman LELAND. I encourage you to keep fighting.

Ms. JONES. I've got three beautiful kids.

Chairman LELAND. Let me now yield to Mrs. Roukema.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Chairman, I think you've asked the questions that I wanted to ask concerninig the previous job history and your efforts to get a job. I think that, if I could just make an editorial comment here without asking you further questions, your testimony has really outlined not only the dilemma, the vicious circle that you spoke about, but also you've proven the point of the developing national debate over welfare reform which this committee has had an interest in.

Not only the need for job training, but the need for help in caring for your children during that time because you are in that

dilemma of not being able to separate yourself from your children necessarily without proper supervision for them while you, in fact, are either job hunting or in further training.

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. So I do appreciate your testimony. The other question of the shelter issue and the homeless issue is intimately related to the welfare reform questions. And I appreciate and thank you for being here today.

Ms. JONES. All right. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. The gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Penny.

Mr. PENNY. Yes. I——

Chairman LELAND. Ms. Jones, we still have some more questions of you if you don't mind staying at the witness table.

Ms. JONES. OK.

Mr. PENNY. If you feel uncomfortable answering some of these questions, fine. But I'm curious to make some comparisons between where you're at today financially and where you'd be at if you were able to get a job, assuming that that job isn't going to pay much more than the minimum wage.

Do you get monthly assistance, a general assistance check right now?

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Mr. PENNY. And that's about how much?

Ms. JONES. $327.

Mr. PENNY. $327? And out of that, do you have to pay something for the housing at this homeless shelter?

Ms. JONES. No. I don't have to pay anything as far as—no type of rent. But as far as, like, you save, you know, a lot of people there try to save their money for a down payment because a lot of times, in St. Louis, you have to pay the first and last month's rent. That's probably most likely everywhere.

Mr. PENNY. In other words, you're trying to save out of your $327 some money that you can put toward rent so you can get back into a rental facility?

Ms. JONES. In an apartment. Right.

Mr. PENNY. But the public assistance programs are picking up the cost for you and others that are in this homeless shelter for now.

Ms. JONES. No—yes.

Mr. PENNY. You're not paying out-of-pocket any daily amount?

Ms. JONES. No, I'm not paying. No. But I have something else that I would like to say.

Mr. PENNY. Yes.

Ms. JONES. All riqht. I get $327. OK. That's correct.

Mr. PENNY. OK.

Ms. JONES. All right. If I put money in the bank, then the ADC people, you have to report that. If you save any money, then, if I let them know that I've got money in the bank trying to save for an apartment, then the next month my check is lower because you aren't supposed to have——

Mr. PENNY. Because they offset the money you've saved.

Ms. JONES. You don't—it's not the ideal on the amount. It's just that you're supposed to have zero zero income. So if I save, say, $150 out of my check, then I have to fill out the MSR form and

send it in. And I'd let them know that I, you know, have $150 placed in the bank and I'm saving it, regardless to what it is going forward for.

Then my $327, the next month, won't be $327.

Mr. PENNY. How much would they—do they deduct dollar for dollar or——

Ms. JONES. No. I really don't know, you know.

Mr. PENNY. But there is some offset, isn't there?

Ms. JONES. It would be small. OK. Once before I had put some money in the bank and I let my caseworker know, and which it was like $200 and some dollars, it was like from income tax.

OK. I didn't get a check for 2 months.

Mr. PENNY. OK.

Ms. JONES. All right. Because I had got a check, like, the beginning of that month. And then I got the income tax check. So 2 months until the amount that they feel has been issued, if it's anything more than $327 it will stop.

But without food stamps, I can't save that much because we have to eat everyday. My kids catch buses to school, then I catch buses to jobs and I have to pay my sister a little money to watch my little boy so I can go look for these jobs.

So every month, at the end of it, I've got about, say, $80 or $90. How can you get out of the shelter when the rent is $350, $327, you know, in which you have to have the first and last months' rent.

Mr. PENNY. That's what I was going to ask. Most of the rent that would accommodate like yours——

Ms. JONES. With three kids.

Mr. PENNY [continuing]. Is in the neighborhood of $300 to $350 in your area?

Ms. JONES. $300 and $350.

Mr. PENNY. How much is covered in terms of the meals at the shelter? Are some meals provided free at the shelter?

Ms. JONES. Well, they provide three meals a day but the type of food that they cook, it's mostly generic food. OK? It's no seasoning. You know, for some people, OK, it's all right. But as far as my kids, they're used to eating very properly and well.

Mr. PENNY. And typically because they serve early in the afternoon and your kids aren't back to catch that evening meal?

Ms. JONES. Right. They won't get breakfast and lunch. But as far as the dinner, half of the time, like I was saying, the cooks are underpaid. It would be burnt. And then if it's not burnt, it's the different things, just spaghetti and putting a can of peas in it. You know, no spaghetti sauce.

You know, it's not right. It's not proper eating. It's what they eat. Maybe if the cooks were paid more or the shelters had more money to buy the proper things to fix it right, then it would be right.

Mr. PENNY. And you spend approximately how much of the $327 in food?

Ms. JONES. Well, I have $80 left.

Mr. PENNY. You usually have about $80 left at the end of the month?

Ms. JONES. Eighty dollars a month, right, because you have to buy food which, in the area, I stay in two shelters. OK? The shel-

ters in St. Louis, you would be in a day shelter in the daytime, and a night shelter at night.

All right. You have to leave the shelter at 5 o'clock in the morning and they take you to the day shelter. From there, you get your kids together, you send them off or take them to school, whatever kind of way you can work it out.

Then from there, you do your chores, or whatever it takes to keep the shelter clean. OK. At 3:30, my kids will be back.

At 6 o'clock, a van picks us up and takes us back to the night shelter. So we just spend the night there. At 5:00 o'clock in the morning, it's like a routine, you never stop.

Mr. PENNY. You indicated that you're trying to pick up a cosmetology degree as well? You said you're working on a cosmetology degree?

Ms. JONES. Right. I'm trying to go to school. Yes.

Mr. PENNY. And are you paying that out-of-pocket? How are you paying for that?

Ms. JONES. No. Through my high school. When I went to high school, OK. I graduated. And I graduated in cosmetology. All I really need is to take my test. I need a few more classes.

Mr. PENNY. Oh, OK.

Ms. JONES. OK. So a lady that has a beauty shop, I can get certified through her which is a friend of my kids' grandmother.

Mr. PENNY. OK. So it's not like a vocational school program that you're involved in?

Ms. JONES. No. It's no kind of vocational training school.

Mr. PENNY. Do you get food stamps as well?

Ms. JONES. No, I don't.

Mr. PENNY. You don't?

Ms. JONES. I couldn't get them because I stayed with my mother. She would not involve her income. Then when I went to the shelter, I really couldn't get them then because I was staying in the shelter and they say that they provide three meals a day.

Mr. PENNY. And last but not least, are you qualified on medical assistance for yourself and your family?

Ms. JONES. Yes. But it don't cover it. It pays—it covers a lot but it's a lot that it does not cover.

Mr. PENNY. What do you think you would have to make, I mean, just off the top of your head, what do you think you would have to make in an hourly wage to cover——

Ms. JONES. Say to take care of an apartment——

Mr. PENNY [continuing]. Like day care and some of the other expenses you know you would have?

Ms. JONES. I would say about $6 or $7 an hour. You know, that's one way that you will make it and you won't need to have no type of assistance. Because any job that's paying you maybe $6 or $7 an hour, you get benefits with it.

Mr. PENNY. That's an offset.

Ms. JONES. You know. Yes, you can get benefits. And it's more than just, you know, getting $6 or $7 an hour. Then again, a person that has kids and you don't have really no type of degree, you can't really go nowhere, you know, and demand not too much of nothing.

If you go to a vocational training school, OK, you get, say, a loan for $2,500. The ADC people, you get cut off ADC when you receive

that check. OK. About $1,700 out of that would probably go for the schooling within the books. But they don't look at it like that.

You would stop getting assistance until you've gotten up to $2,500 worth, you know, regardless to what it went on. You got this type of money, and it will stop.

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Chairman, I will yield to other members.

Chairman LELAND. The Chair would like to recognize the gentlelady from New Jersey for a unanimous consent request.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Yes. Mr. Chairman, I would like unanimous consent to submit a question to Ms. Jones for the record.

Chairman LELAND. Without objection.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I will also now have to leave, Mr. Chairman. I regret that. But I do have to leave. And with respect to the adoption of the committee report, I would not object, nor do I think any of the minority would object if that report were adopted in my absence via the voice vote.

Chairman LELAND. The gentlelady has made a good point. Let me remind the members that each of you has received a copy of the report on homelessness prepared by the Select Committee on Hunger.

I'm going to ask at this time that we vote on that report so that the minority will be present.

If the gentlelady from New Jersey will please wait for one moment.

Is there any discussion on the report?

[No response.]

Chairman LELAND. I hear no discussion on the report or no request for a question or comments on the report. Mr. Flake, the gentleman from New York, has moved for the adoption of this report.

All in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman LELAND. All opposed, say nay.

[No response.]

Chairman LELAND. Hearing no opposition, the ayes have it. The report is adopted. I thank the gentlelady from New Jersey.

[Report is adopted without opposition.]

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Bilbray, the gentleman from Nevada.

Mr. BILBRAY. Yes. I was wondering. You mentioned about the requirements on, you know, the first and last months' rent to get an apartment.

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Now, through the housing authority in your city, don't they provide low-cost housing that would not require that stringent——

Ms. JONES. Sure, if the freeze wasn't on it. There's no more funds.

Mr. BILBRAY. I see. There's no more funds.

Ms. JONES. The waiting list is 3 to 5 years long.

Mr. BILBRAY. Three to five years?

Ms. JONES. Yes.

Mr. BILBRAY. There's no alteratives that they have? They don't supplement housing within——

Ms. JONES. Like emergency section A or emergency housing? Sure, if you're a child abuse parent. Those are the only ones that

they're taking now. You know, it's like, abuse your kids and then we can help you all get a place. You know. That's the way they came to me.

And that's where the Human Development Corporation, that's with the Urban League, that's with quite a few, you know, people that I have gotten in touch with that is through the housing development.

They're just not—they don't have any funds. The waiting list is 3 to 5 years long. And, you know, if they had the funds then they could probably do it. But you still had to be on the waiting list to get in the development.

Mr. BILBRAY. How long have you been on the list?

Ms. JONES. I have been on the list twice. OK? I was on the list in 1979. All right. Then I moved in housing and which the building that I was in, it turned out to be housing solely as a share buyer, home buyers. Or anyway, housing lost the building.

And so that means I was off the housing program when they sold the building. So they put me back on the list and I have been on the list now for 2 years. And that's in the city and the county.

Chairman LELAND. The gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Damien.

DAMIEN. Huh?

Mr. ACKERMAN. I've been watching you. I've been keeping an eye on you. You look like you're having fun. Are you having fun?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. How old are you?

DAMIEN. Seven.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Seven? Where do you live?

DAMIEN. Huh?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Where do you live?

DAMIEN. My grandmother's.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you live in the shelter too?

DAMIEN. Sometimes we go by granny's house.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you sleep in the shelter?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you like it there?

DAMIEN. Sometimes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What do you like about it?

DAMIEN. We've got some toys we can play with.

Mr. ACKERMAN. OK.

DAMIEN. I've got some friends like Joy's son.

Mr. ACKERMAN. How many kids are there?

DAMIEN. Huh?

Mr. ACKERMAN. How many kids are there?

DAMIEN. Three.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you go to school?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are you smart?

DAMIEN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What grade are you in?

DAMIEN. Second.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The second grade?

DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. What are you going to be when you grow up?
DAMIEN. Let me see. A police. I'm going to be an astronaut.
Ms. JONES. He told me that last night.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Not a Congressman, huh? [Laughter.]
But we're happy to hear that, especially those guys from St. Louis. They're very happy to hear that.
Do you want to have a house when you grow up?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Or would you rather live in a shelter?
DAMIEN. House.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Why?
DAMIEN. I can get some more friends and I can still watch the cartoons on Saturday mornings.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you have a television in the shelter
DAMIEN. Yes. But we only get to stay up to 9 to 12 o'clock. I always used to watch the Three Stooges. [Laughter.]
Mr. ACKERMAN. How do you do in school?
DAMIEN. Fine. I get my report card next week.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you take mathematics?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. How about history?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you like your teacher?
DAMIEN. Huh?
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you like your teacher?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. What school do you go to?
DAMIEN. Northway Branch.
Mr. ACKERMAN. OK. How many kids are in your class?
DAMIEN. Twenty.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Twenty? How many of them live in the shelter?
DAMIEN. I don't know.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you ever go to any of the houses of the other children in your class?
DAMIEN. Yes. I know where some of them live.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Do you go over there?
DAMIEN. Yes. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Where do they live?
DAMIEN. One of them, my best friend, lives right down the street from the school.
Mr. ACKERMAN. All right. Does he have a house?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. A nice house?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Would you like a house like that?
DAMIEN. It got burnt up.
Mr. ACKERMAN. Your house got burnt up?
DAMIEN. Uh, uh. My friend's, but they put some boards over the burnt place.
Mr. ACKERMAN. They put boards? Is that what you said?
DAMIEN. Yes.
Mr. ACKERMAN. You've got to be very careful?
DAMIEN. Huh?

Mr. ACKERMAN. I said you've got to be very careful.

DAMIEN. I go straight and get on Kings Highway. I don't go straight that way where he lives at.

I saw a house in a fairy tale and I'll tell you how mine is going to be.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What did that house look like?

DAMIEN. In the fairy tale?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes.

DAMIEN. It was a candy house.

Mr. ACKERMAN. A candy house? That's the kind of house you want?

DAMIEN. Uh, huh. [Laughter.]

Mr. ACKERMAN. You had better be careful. Someone like me will come along and eat your house. [Laughter.]

Mr. ACKERMAN. We thank you very much for being here, Damien.

DAMIEN. Well, I really want my house yellow and red.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yellow and red. Good colors.

Damien, thank you very, very much.

DAMIEN. OK. Bye.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Dorgan.

Mr. DORGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Nancy, thank you for coming. I know it is not easy for someone who is not used to public speaking and appearing in groups with lights to sit at the table like that and bear with us.

But I would like to ask you a few questions about hope. You said before that you just had to cope with it; that you really have nowhere to go. And yet you keep going.

How do you retain hope in these situations? You struggle with these programs which don't seem to work together very well. And yet you seem determined to find some daylight out there and solve these problems.

Ms. JONES. Well, I feel like this comes from my aunt that raised me. She always told me never give up. You know, if there's a beginning, there's an end to anything. And regardless to what, you know, you might run into a lot of deadends, but if you keep on trying you never know what you might run into.

You can't give up. I can't give up. I have three kids, you know. They're looking up to me. That's why when I say cope, in other words, deal with it, you know. Some days, it gets hard.

I have met some pretty nice ladies in the shelter, you know, who maybe work there. So we can talk and communicate with each other and kind of help each other out a lot. You know, you just can't give up. That's what I mean by that.

You know, I just have to get out and look. Get me a paper everyday, go look for me a job. If not a job, go do some volunteer work because I really believe in the Good Lord and I know you get your blessings.

Mr. DORGAN. I think we've gone throuqh a period in this country, especially here in Washington, where the poor have been out of fashion. There's been a notion that somehow if you're poor, you just haven't gone right. You haven't pulled yourself up by your bootstraps.

That's an unfortunate attitude because all through history, we have people who fall on hard times, run into tough situations, are disadvantaged for one reason or another. A country that can't address those problems in the right way is a country that won't long remain strong in my judgment.

I want to ask you a question I asked someone in a shelter. I was visiting a shelter and I asked someone there, who was talking about how the feeding programs interact with the shelter programs, the difficulty of getting into low-income housing, the difficulty of getting out and finding a low-paying job and then losing your AFDC benefits, trying to keep your kids together and save money when they take your savings—all of those things.

Getting a Pell Grant and finally go to school. And the Pell Grant then means that you have to pay more for rent and low-income housing. All those things that seem somehow not to fit in our programs.

I asked this person in the shelter, "If you could fix all these things, just by yourself; if you could just decide, all right, I'm going to fix them because I know they're wrong; how would you fix them?"

This person gave me kind of an interesting answer. If you were a benevolent dictator here and you could just fix it all up by yourself, how would you put these things together?

Ms. JONES. Well, for one thing, I would—the first thing is I would separate, you know, like shelters from different—there's always going to be shelters. OK? At least we hope that it stops. But the way things are looking, I think there will always be shelters.

I would place funds in shelters so they could be—you know, work properly. And the next thing I would do, I would place money in these Government programs as far as like the Urban League, housing development, and things like that.

Another thing I would do is open me a company. And all the women that have kids and need jobs, I'd come and let us all work together.

And then the next thing that I would do, I would kind of work with some of the child abuse parents too because people that abuse their kids in the shelters, it's already a problem there because they're in a shelter. You know, and they are abused parents.

And those kids walk around with hatred in their hearts and anger. And, you know, I would really provide money, and food and clothes in shelters. That's something that I would do.

Mr. DORGAN. Well, on the issue of child abuse, people who go into shelters and feel their situation is hopeless are full of despair and tend to lash out.

Are there many instances of child abuse in shelters?

Ms. JONES. Well, not necessarily. This problem happens before they get in shelters. You know. And that's why—it seems from my experience and being around the 90 people that I'll be around everyday for the last 45 days, a lot of parents come from home problems that they had or either from childhood problems.

But as far as being in the shelter, it seems like families, when you're in the shelter, you get closer because you mainly have to—by you being around a lot of strange people—you don't know these

people and you have to kind of like stick around and keep an eye on each other.

So it seems like families get closer when you are in the shelter. I know that. But as far as abusing, and things like that, I think if they had that problem they came with that problem.

Mr. DORGAN. Well, Nancy, testimony like yours gives us an opportunity to better understand what's happening and better draft better solutions to these problems. You're a very special lady. I'm sure of that. I appreciate it.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. Ms. Jones, let me also commend you for coming before this committee and having the courage to speak and to give testimony that only you could give.

I have to ask, though, shortly this hearing will conclude. You'll be back on your way to St. Louis. What's going to happen to you then?

Ms. JONES. I go back to a shelter, you know. And I start my routine over. I make sure Damien, I go to school with him and I have already explained to them about him about being out of school. And I'll go back. Like I said, even if it wouldn't help me, it probably would help somebody else.

So it's not, like, no one came to me and said, "Hey. If you do this and explain your situation, we'll give you this." No. I have met people that probably I didn't know how to get in contact with. Which, you know, when I get back and start working on things—but nothing is really promised me. So I don't get my hopes up no more.

I would go back to my normal routine as far as trying to get out of the shelter.

Mr. MFUME. What do you say to your children in explaining why their lifestyle is a lot different from the lifestyle of many of their friends and certainly a lot different from the lifestyle that you'd like to provide?

Ms. JONES. Well, at first, when I got in the shelter, it was like, I didn't know how to explain it to them, or nothing. So I took it like, you know, We're going to go somewhere to camp. Do you want to go with me? You know. It was like that. OK?

But I had to—but Damien, he's pretty smart. So after so long, I just had to tell him. You know, I just had to be straight. Hey. They knew about the apartment and staying with my mother. And by being so many people there, things didn't work out there.

You know, I'm not the type of parent to where I go somewhere and my kids go somewhere else. You know, we go together. So just how it was happening, that's how I was explaining it to them. But I was all this time letting them know that I love them and that things are going to get better.

Because we lived very nicely before I got in the shelter. And most of the things that I had when I was in my apartment I still have them. So it's like, you know, we went together. We just go together and do things.

I put them in storage, and things like that. And we'll be, you know, back up on our feet. I just explain it to them, you know, I just share with them. They know everything that is going on, that's happening. I just let them know.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Kostmayer.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Ms. Jones, thank you for appearing before the committee today. We appreciate it. It's very helpful to us.

Ms. JONES. You're welcome.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. I gather you think you're going to get out of this fix, this jam that you're in. Do you?

Ms. JONES. Oh, I know I am.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. How will that happen? What has to happen here to get you back on your feet?

Ms. JONES. Well, either I find a job or maybe the sisters that I'm working with, you know, they're trying to find me some type of house, you know, which I turned down a house not too long ago and for the reason that—OK. I'm working in a place where nuns are, it's in St. Johns. That's where I live. In this place.

And I work voluntarily there. I did go to see someone from Neighborhood Enterprises one time, but he wasn't interested in showing me nice housing. He asked me if I kept the places where I lived very clean. OK.

The next thing he asked me was, "Have you ever had bugs around you?" OK. I let that pass by, you know. I said, "I've never lived around them. But if they came, I know how to deal with them."

So the next thing he asked me, "How old are you?" I told him how old I was. And, "Do you have any high school situations? What are you planning to do as far as yourself?" So I had to stop him. I had to also let him know that just because I'm homeless, that don't mean that I'm crazy, that don't mean that I have a problem, that don't mean that I have to walk around dirty and unclean.

So quickly he goes and gets a list of all the apartments that he had, which was called Neighborhood Enterprises. It was a real estate company. So he scratched out all the apartments.

And he said, "Well * * *" it was me and another lady and her family. And he said, "Well, you all are not eligible for these," he said, "But you all can go on your own and look at these."

Every building that he scratched out was a rehabilitated building.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. A nice building.

Ms. JONES. A nice building. Every building that he left on there was like a condemned building. So I told the sister, I said, "Well, you don't want to be choicy when people think they're helping you." I said, "Well, I'm not * * *"

Mr. KOSTMAYER. But the Government would pay part of your rent? Was that the idea?

Ms. JONES. Well, yes. They would pay part of it like for a certain amount of time.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. A certain amount of time.

Ms. JONES. It's a program that she works in.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Did you go and look at these apartments?

Ms. JONES. Me and her and the girl, Joyce, went and looked at the apartments. That's the worst—they looked like condemned buildings.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. They were really terrible?

Ms. JONES. They was really terrible. We even, most of the ladies, we sit in there together. We would be working. And I said, 'Well, you all, you do what you want to do. But I can't accept it."

So I had explained to the sister that it is not that I want to be choicy but before I got in this predicament I lived nicely. I can't live in a condemned building. You know, it wasn't even up to par. It wouldn't even pass an inspection for an occupancy permit.

I said, "I can't move into nothing I've got to struggle with, fix it up, and do this, and fight bugs."

Mr. KOSTMAYER. The key here, then, is a job. Is that the most important thing?

Ms. JONES. No. To me housing is most important. I wouldn't want to wait on housing.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. But the most important first step, then, is to get a job.

Ms. JONES. Is to find me a job.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Now you have three children altogether?

Ms. JONES. I have three children.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Your other children are younger?

Ms. JONES. Yes. They're younger. Damien is my oldest. I have a daughter, Chabrielle, which will be 6 years old next month. And I have a son, Darris, who is 3 now.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Suppose you were to get lucky and get a good job, what would you do with your children?

Ms. JONES. Well, I have nine other brothers and sisters. So we all kind of work together.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. So if you were to get a job, your brothers and sisters would look after your children?

Ms. JONES. Right. I wouldn't have a problem with the baby sitter.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. They would look after your children.

Ms. JONES. Right. That's the way we do, you know. We kind of help each other out. One watch one kid. You know, whatever way, there's no problem.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. How is the job search doing?

Ms. JONES. I've got a restaurant that said once I get settled, if I'm still interested, I can come there. They're going to open a top floor to it. So I really can't say—well, he said if I get situated soon then he could probably give me a job. OK?

Mr. KOSTMAYER. But is that a minimum wage job?

Ms. JONES. A dime more than the minimum wage.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Is there any way you can live on the minimum wage?

Ms. JONES. There's no way I can live on it not without no type of assistance.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. So you've got to get a job that pays better than minimum wage?

Ms. JONES. That pays me better than minimum wage. But as far as—like, they give you—let's say the ADC people would give you, I think it's 2 or 3 months, you know, to carry on.

It's just with me now. I need a—I can't find no kind of housing assistance. So I need extra money. You know. So any kind of job will give me some extra money so maybe that could fall at the time when my check comes along and I can take it and go get me an apartment.

Then I would have the $600 or $700 rent because they will let you—you can get by with 1 month with it. But the next month, it's no check. You would maybe get a Medicaid card if the job doesn't have benefits. As far as you, you can get a Medicaid card.

But in the long run, that runs out.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Is there any program in your city to provide you with any kind of job training that you would like to take advantage of or is that not something——

Ms. JONES. Well, I wouldn't mind going as far as the job training is concerned. But that's a dead-end too. Once you get the grant, everything is going to stop. So then you don't have no income. Some income is better than none.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Once you get the grant for the training?

Ms. JONES. OK. If you're going through a vocational training center or Artisma Beauty College, or anything, you have to get a student loan. OK?

You get the student loan. That's considered as maybe $2,500 or $3,500. OK? Once you get it and you cash their check, ADC steps in. Your check stops until you've added up to the amount you have.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. You mean you've got to pay for these job training programs?

Ms. JONES. In the long run, you have to pay. Because it automatically stops the service. Because the service will stop.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. The city, State, or Federal Government doesn't provide the job training program for people who have no jobs and have no money to pay for it?

Ms. JONES. Well, you can go through a vocational straight training school, but you still have to fill out for a student loan. And after you get the student loan, that's like money to them regardless. If the school is going to take most of it as far as the course is concerned, it's still with your name on it.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Any job training program you go to you've got to pay for and that would cut off your assistance.

Ms. JONES. That would cut off your assistance.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Well, I wish you the best of luck and I'm sure, with your determination; you will prevail. Thank you very much for coming forth today.

Ms. JONES. All right. Thank you.

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you.

Mr. Espy.

Mr. ESPY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Jones, I really do appreciate your being here. It may seem difficult sitting there, as you're sitting, talking to a bunch of guys on another side of a table. But we really are listening and we really do care.

We will take the things that you're saying and utilize them to determine and establish policy. This will help not only you but others in your situation.

I just have one question. You talked about the situations of child abuse that may exist in the shelter. But what about the problem of crime, generally? Are you afraid for their safety or for Damien's safety——

Ms. JONES. In the shelter?

Mr. ESPY [continuing]. In the shelter?

Ms. JONES. Sure.

Mr. ESPY. What is it like in that context?

Ms. JONES. OK. It's about 90 people in the shelter, in the day shelter. Fifty of them have mental problems that Malcolm Blisten let out because if they're not considered as being dangerous to the public, they can't keep them.

So they have severe problems. Like Damien was saying with the lady with the thing around her. OK. She's got some kind of wires in her jaw, you know, and that's bad for kids to have to sit up and eat and see this.

And then we've got one lady, named Bonnie, and Bonnie wears a lot of clothes. She has lice, and things, like that all the time.

Then you've got another——

Mr. ESPY. Has what?

Ms. JONES. Lice.

Mr. ESPY. Oh, OK. Lice.

Ms. JONES. I've never been around them.

Mr. ESPY. All right.

Ms. JONES. Then you've got people walking around that have really—you know, have problems.

Mr. ESPY. Mental problems.

Ms. JONES. You know they can't help themselves. And you can't be mad at them. They're not—I'll be scared sometimes when they get on the deep end. But a lot of times, when you're the type of person whose got a heart and you show them that you care, they kind of like look out for you a little bit.

It's kind of like everybody is beginning to be a family. You know. You kind of look out. Now, sometimes the ones that are on heavy medication, they may be in a bad mood and they might hit the kids. Recently we had a thing where a young parent—not a young parent, a parent fought somebody's daughter which she was under age for a bad case of stealing.

See, that's the thing. You have to take your clothes with you. You can't leave things, you know. Which I have three kids and I travel with three kids. I'm walking around with luggage everyday, you know. And that's hectic. And I can't keep an eye on my kids and watch the luggage and watch the people around me.

And that's why I'm losing everything. You know, my kids clothes and which there are some people that don't have clothes for their kids. You know. And it's a resentment. And then they have attitudes and be upset, you know, Because her kids dress nice. She don't need to be here. She don't look like street, you know.

It really is mostly—you'd be scared some days. Then again, when you're a parent, you can't let your kids know that you're scared so you've got to be brave. You know, you've got to through but you just have to keep them together, keep them close by you.

Mr. ESPY. So you have to take your children's clothes and your clothes with you when you travel?

Ms. JONES. Everywhere I go. Right.

Mr. ESPY. Thank you, Ms. Jones.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. First of all, I'd like to say to you, Ms. Jones, I think that you represent a very positive image this morn-

ing. You represent an image that lets the public know that all people who are in shelters and suffering from conditions that they have no responsibility for are not inarticulate or incapable of being able to define and identify their problems.

I'm very pleased to be present to hear your testimony. One of the things that comes through very loud and clear, is that the system, obviously, does alot to destroy the initiative of those individuals who have the desire and determination to try to change their present condition.

For instance, you talk about grants, but once you get a grant that would enable you to improve your condition by enrolling in a job training program then ADC cuts off a portion of your money.

You talk about the various kinds of events that occured when trying to find and secure a shelter, and how you were placed on a list and shown only substandard housing and denied access to another list and, therefore, you are forced into substandard housing.

So it seems to me that as you address this committee and we try to attack the problem, that a part of what we need to do is change some formulas so that persons like yourself will be able to know that when you move toward improvement that the system will support that.

I'd just like to know your opinion in terms of other areas where you see the necessity for the committee to look at how to make improvements. For instance, the last statement you made, regarding mentally retarded people being in the same shelter with more stable people, and where families with children are in the same shelters with other people who have no children, is not good.

Just give an overview, if you can, of other areas that you think we might be able to list as we try to put together some legislation to make it possible for individuals like you to change their condition.

Ms. JONES. OK. What you're asking is explain to you, like, where you all might be able to help in another way.

Mr. FLAKE. Yes.

Ms. JONES. OK. As far as like helping the people get out of shelters. All right. One thing that I know is they really need somewhere for people, like I said, have problems. You know, these people have to—at nighttime, they can't stay where the kids stay. Seriously. They have to leave. They're on the streets at night.

Just think, there's this one lady, as sweet as she wants to be. She walks around and she tells everybody, you know, how she used to work for the radio station. And how she used to do this, you know. And how she used to be this, that and the other.

Somewhere along the line, she lost it. You know, her mind is gone. I think that there should be somewhere, there should be a building strictly for that kind of people, you know. And also giving them help, you know, because in the evening, people with families, a lot of the parents hate to see them have to leave.

At 6:30, they have to go. They're in the streets at 6 o'clock that morning. You know, they're still ladies. You know, why should they have to walk the streets all day just because they have mental problems?

Another thing, as far as the child care, there's no day care. You know, if you say you stay in the shelter and you want to go look for

a job or get a job, or you have a job, and you want someone and you stay in the shelter, "I'm sorry. You're not eligible. You have to come through Title 20," or you have to do this or you have to do that.

See, shelters are secondhand which I think shelters should be firsthand, first with everything else. Because these are the same people that rent from you, buy food normally like anyone else.

And, you know, I think it should be more funds in programs to help. One thing about it in St. Louis, they start a program and then they stop one. You know. So you just think about the people that they stop in this program just to start this one.

They send you to school. They say—they'll tell you, "You can go to school," you can do this and you can do that. "We guaranteed you jobs." That's bull. There's so many who went through these vocational training centers who don't have a job.

All they have is a certificate. The schools should be more accurate. You can go to school—I can go sign up for the vocational training center today and in 6 months have my thing. And I could go to class about five or six times and I'm still going to get that, because all they want is the commission.

I think they should be off into it more. You know, more strict rules. You know, the youngsters nowdays, they hang out. It's like, you know, they quit high school. Then they say, "Well, your child has got to go through this." This is what makes me mad with the welfare system is that, OK, people with teenagers that go to school, OK, they say, "I'm sorry. Your child is 15 or 16 years old. She's supposed to be in high school. But she has been missing."

If she doesn't go to school then, get enrolled in some type of school, then your assistance will stop. OK? Then the parent will enroll the kid in a vocational training center. The kid goes to school maybe once a week. In 6 months, they have a certificate.

Their funds are still rolling and are going to keep on going until they get 18. I think they should be trained and be in the Job Corps there and stop them at 18. Stop accepting them.

Then when they're there, they're just like, "I go to Job Corps. I'm in Job Corps." But they'll be everywhere else. I think when they start these programs instead of just funding this money, I think they should make rules and stick with them and go on and let people get the right thing.

Because there's a lot of people that do want to do things. OK? And then in these vocational training centers, they take you with no high school diploma, no G.E.D. A lot of people want their G.E.D. to go to a vocational training center.

But they've got this test there, for the high school diploma, and a lot of them fail it. Then they say, "Well, we're sorry. We can't accept you. You can't even pass the test." But that's why they come to the school, to get the help. You know.

And that leaves a lot of people, like, out in the open. And then they give you, you know, so then that's when this comes in. Their friend will go and take the test for them.

OK. Then they get in the school. But I think that's bad. I think they should accept them on whatever level they're on and try to work with them from there. You know, that's something that I would see.

Mr. FLAKE. We need to reshape and redesign the programs to accommodate all of the different levels in order to move people through that process.

Ms. JONES. Right. But, you know, there should be testing. The ones that can score high on the test, they should be placed. You know, just like in high school, you score—OK. When I was in high school, the way we scored on our TBBS test, the Best Test, that's the way we got placed in high school.

OK. The ones who made low classes and needed help, and that sort of thing, they went to schools that specialize. I think vocational training centers should be like that instead of just turning the youngsters around that want to go just because they failed that test.

They need to send them somewhere to help them, you know, to get their education, or whatever. To help them be able to learn to read and write. You know, a lot of them can read but ain't been to school in so long, and then the test would be on things that was in the book when he was in the eighth grade.

And then a lot of them fail it. Then they turn them around. "I'm sorry, but we don't have any help for you." So I think people should be placed as they—you know, like the things they do bad in, place them in a Center that's going to help them with that.

Now that's just my opinion.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you very much.

Chairman LELAND. Ms. Jones, you have been very helpful to the committee.

Ms. JONES. OK. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Your recomendations are invaluable as well as your comments about your personal experiences I wish you the very best.

Ms. JONES. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. We hope that Congress will move very fast and very effectively in trying to resolve the many problems that you have laid out before us today. We certainly appreciate your coming and bringing Damien with you. You've both been very helpful.

If more people who are as eloquent as you are, would testify about their daily conditions we could make greater strides in the Congress to alleviate the causes and consequences of hunger and poverty in this country.

Ms. JONES. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you very much.

Ms. JONES. I hope there's somebody listening who will give me a job. [Laughter.]

DAMIEN. Bye.

Chairman LELAND. Goodbye Damien. Thank you very much.

We have with us now the distinguished majority leader of the House of Representatives. He is leading the charge in the battle to end homelessness with his legislation. The Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act, H.R. 558.

We are certainly proud and appreciative that he would come before the House Select Committee on Hunger to testify on the critical issues that we are discussing today.

STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS S. FOLEY A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. FOLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted for this opportunity and appreciate your holding these hearings to bring to the attention of the country, as well as the Congress, the severe problems that are faced everyday by increasing numbers of homeless Americans.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, the effort to provide a continuing national commitment to solving the problems of hunger and homelessness is one in which you have taken a most important and commanding lead yourself.

I would like to thank you for that help, particularly with respect to formulating the health provisions of H.R. 588 and your contribution to an amendment which we expect to add to the bill relating to hunger among the homeless.

In this latter endeavor, both you and the distinguished gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta, have been leaders in the Congress and you are both to be highly commended.

The Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act, H.R. 558, which Mr. McKinney of Connecticut and I have introduced, is an emergency bill. While the money authorized by it would be available for appropriation immediately, we need to maintain our efforts whether the homeless are in the headlines or not. The bill you have introduced, Mr. Chairman, H.R. 286, ensures that our attention will continue to be focused on the alleviation of all of the problems faced by the homeless and, I hope, on the eventual solution of this national tragedy.

I am confident that your committee and others will seriously consider the whole range of causes and possible cures for this problem.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, there is disagreement in the country as to exactly how many homeless citizens we have. I don't find this surprising because it's the very nature of the problem with people who are a transient, disparate population without addresses. It should be difficult to enumerate.

But there is substantial agreement that the numbers of homeless people are increasing and at an accelerated rate.

Three recent studies, one conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, have found that the homeless population has increased by an alarming 25 percent in 1986 alone. The Mayors' study, conducted by a task force headed by Raymond L. Flynn, the distinguished mayor of the city of Boston, found that in 70 percent of the 25 major cities it surveyed, homeless people were being turned away from shelters. In all, they estimate that about one-quarter of all the homeless people were being turned away.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact of all, that I think deserves our most concerned attention, is that the fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children. Although the total proportion of the homeless represented by this group is still believed to be relatively small, they illustrate that the problem has gone far beyond the conventional perception of the homeless many people in this country have had.

No longer can anyone say the homeless are merely those who could not settle down or chose not to. There are now people who desperately need shelter but cannot get it.

The Salvation Army, which has done so much to address this problem over the years, has found that increasing numbers of homeless people are among the estimated 60,000 that it shelters each night. Many of this number have jobs but simply cannot find shelter.

Over half of the homeless suffer from either mental illness or substance abuse. They not only need our assistance, Mr. Chairman, but we have a moral obligation to extend a helping hand to the homeless and to provide at least a bare minimum of shelter, food, and medical care they require.

The bill H.R. 558, represents a serious effort to address this growing problem. It would authorize $20 million in addition to the $50 million already provided in law for emergency food and shelter under the Federal Emergency Management Agency with a further $100 million going in grants to local communities for extra shelter space; an additional $30 million to localities to provide transitional groups homes for the homeless who can move out of emergency shelters; and $100 million for financing 4,000 rental subsidy certificates, where the Federal Government agrees to subsidize rent for 5 years, to be used to help a succession of homeless families.

The bill also allows $100 million in health care for the homeless, one-quarter through a competitive grant program and three-quarters through centers directed solely toward the homeless.

Finally, $100 million would be used to identify under-utilized Federal, State, and local government buildings which could be used in various capacities as facilities to help the homeless.

Rounding out these provisions, we will add what I feel are some modest but very necessary improvements in our efforts to feed the homeless. These amendments will have bipartisan support. I will assume that we will be extending the Emergency Temporary Food Program for the homeless and make it possible to count a larger amount of shelter costs against income for the purpose of determining food stamp eligibility. This would be the first step in a consistent effort to prevent homelessness before it begins.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 558 is not an attempt to assign blame or to point fingers. It is an honest effort to do what we can, however little and however belatedly, to relieve the misery of homelessness for hundreds of thousands of Americans of both sexes, of all races, backgrounds, and ages, many of whom are ill or not able to care for themselves; and all of whom deserve the minimum that human decency requires of those of us who are more fortunate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. Again, let me tell you and the committee members how much I admire your consistent concern and theirs in addressing this national tragedy and, I think, national shame that we must work together to resolve.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Foley appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 96.]

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Foley, let me thank you for making this a high priority issue before the Members of the House. We are very greatful to you.

I'd like to inform you that the gentlelady from New Jersey, the ranking minority member, earlier conveyed her appreciation for your testimony. She was sorry that she had to leave before you arrived.

Are there any other comments that the gentlemen would like to make to the majority leader?

Mr. FLAKE. Good morning, Mr. Foley.

Mr. FOLEY. Good morning.

Mr. FLAKE. Certainly, in following the testimony of Ms. Jones, a person who lives in a shelter in St. Louis, and has identified numerous problems for us, I would hope that as we move beyond the emergency bill that we are currently addressing, that we will be able to take a good look at some of the issues that she has raised, particularly in the area of supportive services and how the system now takes away from rather than adds to self-sufficiency.

For instance, if they get into a training program or if they decide to do other things to improve their lives, I would like to work with you as we try to move beyond the emergency and then really look at what we can do to assure that people are guaranteed the right to live in dignity even though they are currently suffering.

And, I thank you for coming this morning and look forward to the long haul when this is not on the front pages any longer and we can really get down to looking at how we might be able to impact upon this serious problem.

Mr. FOLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Flake. I agree with you entirely. This bill is an attempt to deal with the symptoms of this problem, primarily. While it is not, I wish it were able to deal with the underlying causes and long-term remedies.

What you mention, I most emphatically agree with. We have to look at the whole range of services that we offer in this country to assure that we are not, as, frankly, I think we are offering and imposing disincentives to people to seek job training, to seek employment.

It's almost inconceivable what we have done in the past and sometimes are doing today which has the result of making people who are striving to find jobs, to get employment, and to be self-supporting bear an extra burden for that effort in a most dramatic and, really, unjustifiable way.

When people go into job training programs in many places, they lose vital nutrition and health benefits that are otherwise available to them if they were not particapting in job training.

We live in a society that holds a common belief that people respond to incentives, to the opportunity to improve their situation if those efforts produce additional benefits to them.

Yet the reality of the message we send to individuals receiving help from public services is: "If you strike out to do something extra to improve your situation, in effect, you are going to be penalized for it." That's a problem we've identified but haven't sufficiently addressed in a serious way.

I hope, apart from this legislation, that Mr. Mfume, you, the chairman, and all of us who are interested in this problem, can see to it that this Congress takes some real steps in the direction of improving that condition.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. I just want to thank the majority leader for the sensitivy in authoring this bill and allowing several of us the opportunity for cosponsorship.

We, on the Banking Committee, had a markup on it, as you know, last week. We will have final markup before the full committee today.

I just want to thank, again, the majority leader for, as Congressman Flake said, making this a priority in the House of Representatives.

Thank you very much.

Mr. FOLEY. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you, Mr. Leader. Thank you very much.

Chairman LELAND. I welcome now Mr. John Bode who is the Assistant Secretary for the Food and Consumer Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In this position, he administers the Food and Nutrition Service and the Human Nutrition Information Service.

We're glad to have you here with us today, Mr. Bode, to address the issue of food assistance for the homeless.

Mr. Bode, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF JOHN W. BODE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND CONSUMER SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY BONNIE O'NEILL, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Mr. BODE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the chairman would like, I'd be happy to summarize my statement and respectfully request that it be included in the record.

Chairman LELAND. The Chair would like to encourage the gentleman to do just that, as a matter of fact, and would accept, without objection, his statement in full for the record.

Mr. BODE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee once again. And I will try to summarize in pointing out what is presently being done to address some of the very important needs of the homeless, with particular attention in the area of food assistance.

The existing programs, such as food stamps, supplemental security income, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, VA benefits and Social Security retirement and disability benefits are currently available to the homeless who meet basic eligibility criteria.

In addition, the Federal Government funds a variety of discretionary programs which can be used to address the needs of the homeless. There are programs generally thought of as meeting the needs of the homeless such as FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and the HHS Runaway and Homeless Youth Program for homeless children.

Then there are programs serving more general purposes which States and localities can use to meet the needs of the homeless, such as the Community Development Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant.

For example, more than $100 million in community development block grant funds have been spent to date to address the shelter

72-313 - 87 - 2

and other needs of the homeless. The administration's 1988 budget proposal also includes—proposes to establish a clearinghouse on the homeless that will provide information and technical assistance to States and local communities interested in establishing or expanding shelters in other programs for the homeless.

This effort will facilitate the effective design and implementation of local homeless programs and will help those local efforts be aware and have access to Federal resources that are available.

The Fiscal Year 1988 budget proposes no changes in individual entitlement program eligibility or benefit standards that would affect the homeless, so these programs will remain fully available to the homeless population.

The budget asks funding for $80 million for FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program. It also requests substantial funding for other discretionary programs that can be used to help the homeless.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to review, in a little more detail, the programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service which provide food assistance to the homeless. It's important to note the magnitude of the Federal food assistance effort which is dramatized by the fiscal year 1986 record.

During that year, just over $20 billion in food assistance was provided. Approximately 19.4 million people each month received food stamps. And during the course of the year, approximately 34 million people were served by the Food Stamp Program.

Thus the Food Stamp Program is, of course, responsive to economic conditions. The program grew to serve well over 22.5 million persons in March 1983. Though the economy has now improved nationwide, it has declined. Of course, School Lunch and School Food Assistance Programs are available without charge, free to children from families with low-income parents.

And the WIC Program does not require a fixed address as a condition of program eligibility which might preclude participation by the homeless. In addition, the Department encourages States to make special efforts to target benefits to homeless and needy persons. And some of those special effort initiatives are detailed in my testimony that will be submitted for the record.

Food stamp regulations have contained no barriers to participation by homeless persons since 1978. Benefits cannot be denied because the household lacks a fixed residence, nor are cooking facilities required for certification.

In November 1983, February 1984, and December 1984, we instructed the Food and Nutrition Service's regional offices to ensure that State agencies were complying with policies to permit eligible homeless people to participate in the program.

Although the Food Stamp Program was already serving homeless people, Congress included this specific requirement in December 1985, Public Law 99-198, that State agencies provide a method for certifying and issuing food stamps to eligible households that do not reside in permanent dwellings or have fixed addresses.

A regulation implementing this requirement has been published. In addition to the statutory change, the regulation also prohibited State agencies from denying eligibility to homeless persons because they could not verify residency.

Prior to publication of this regulation, we again directed the regional offices to ensure that the homeless provisions were being complied with by State agencies.

The Homeless Eligibility Act, part of the Omnibus Drug Enforcement Education and Control Act approved in October 1986, contains several provisions affecting the food stamp participation of homeless persons.

A regulation implementing these provisions is scheduled to be published in early March and go into effect as provided by the statute on April 1, 1987. This legislative provision makes that segment of the homeless population who reside in public or private, nonprofit shelters for the homeless and receive more than one-half of their meals at these shelters eligible for the Food Stamp Program.

These persons may use their food stamps to purchase meals from authorized public or private nonprofit soup kitchens and shelters.

The Food Stamp Program Act provides for timely issuance to those in greatest need. In addition, through our Food Distribution Program, USDA provides foods to State distributing agencies to help meet many of the nutritional needs of the needy including the homeless.

Free surplus commodities are provided for needy persons through profit and nonprofit organizations. Eligible organizations include soup kitchens, food banks, and service-type organizations such as the Salvation Army and the Lions Club.

Commodities are being made available for distribution by State distributing agencies for nonfat dry milk, corn meal, flour, honey, cheese, rice, and butter. Since 1981, these two programs have made over $4 billion worth of dairy and other surplus commodities available through State and local agencies to large numbers of poor and unemployed people.

Surplus commodities are distributed by USDA to schools and thousands of charitable institutions providing meals to the needy.

Mr. Chairman, I'd be delighted to try to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee have.

Responses to Questions for John W. Bode

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MICKEY LELAND

Question. I would like to repeat a question which you requested to respond to more fully for the committee's record: I am aware that the Food and Nutrition Service has developed a system of quality control to minimize error rates in the Food Stamp Program. How is the department using this system or another system to assure that: (1) eligible persons are not denied food stamp benefits erroneously; (2) that collateral contracts are used for persons who have difficulty meeting documentation requirements; and (3) that persons receive expeditied service when they are eligible?

Answer. The food stamp quality control (QC) system is used to identify households which may have been erroneously denied food stamp benefits. State agencies are required to review a sample of negative cases to ensure that policies and procedures are correctly applied. Negative cases consist of households which were denied certification/recertification of whose food stamp benefits were terminated during the certification period. If the QC reviewer determines that a household was incorrectly denied benefits, the case is required to be returned to the State agency for action to certify the household, if it is, in fact, eligible. In addition, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulations require that State agencies assist households in obtaining documentary evidence through collateral contacts when it is difficult for the household to obtain such evidence in a timely manner. State agencies' compliance with this requirement is checked through examining States' policy material and problems dis-

covered during management evaluation and QC reviews would be reported for corrective action. Currently, compliance with expedited service requirements is monitored through the FNS management evaluation (ME) review system. For fiscal years 1986 and 1987, expedited service requirements have been targeted as an ME priority review area for State agencies. Further, all State commissioners have been notified in writing by FNS of the need to ensure that food stamp applicants who qualify for expedited service are provided benefits within the required timeframes.

Question. How are underissuances in the quality control system, which are the result of inappropriate denial of benefits to eligible persons, included in the sanctions against States?

Answer. We would first like to clarify that improper denials of benefits to eligible persons are not considered underissuances under the Food Stamp Program. Underissuances are cases where an eligible person or household was approved to receive benefits but the allotment was less than the amount the person or household was entitled to receive. An underissuance error rate is determined under the Food Stamp Program quality control review system but the underissuance error rate is not used in determining quality control sanctions against States.

By law, the improper denial of benefits to eligible persons is not included in the sanctions against States. As a negative action, cases in which a household's participation was denied or terminated are reviewed under the food stamp quality control review system. The negative case error rate reflects the proportion of negative actions in which households were improperly denied or terminated. The negative case error rate is not used in determining quality control sanctions against the States.

Please note that the underissuance error rate and the negative case error rate are used in determining whether a State is entitled to Federal enhanced funding.

Question. Please supply the committee with any State data you have collected on food stamp underissuance rates, including inappropriate denials and terminations. We would also like to receive such information in the future as soon as it is complied.

Answer. We have enclosed two tables of State data we have collected. Table 2 is from a report entitled Food Stamp Quality Control, Executive Overview, October 1983—September 1984, which we issued in March 1986 and sent to Congress at about that time. It contains data on underissuances. The underissuances in the table do not include inappropriate denials and terminations, which are recorded in the quality control system as negative actions.

Table 10 is from a report entitled Food Stamp Quality Control, Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1983, which we issued in June 1985 and sent to Congress at about that time. It lists the number of negative actions and the percent of State actions that were reported to be in error.

We will continue to supply these reports to the appropriate chairpersons in Congress as they become available and will upon request gladly provide this information to any Member of Congress.

FNS does not routinely validate all States' reports on the accuracy of actions taken to deny or terminate cases. We have recently asked our regional offices to examine such cases in a number of States. Our intent is to ensure that eligible households receive benefits to which they are entitled. The results of these examinations are not yet complete and must be confirmed with the States. We will continue to monitor closely this critical area of program operation.

TABLE 2.—FISCAL YEAR 1984 ACTIVE CASE AND DOLLAR ERROR RATES

State	Percent of cases in error		Percent of dollars in error	
	Overissuances [1]	Underissuances	Overpayments [1]	Underissuances
Connecticut	13.26	5.99	7.11	1.91
Maine	12.61	4.73	6.74	1.57
Massachusetts	17.90	5.20	9.86	1.90
New Hampshire	14.38	6.18	8.18	1.88
New York	16.88	8.70	10.14	3.23
Rhode Island	14.44	5.32	7.08	2.02
Vermont	17.92	5.92	9.71	1.51
NERO	16.55	7.72	9.67	2.83
Delaware	13.56	7.03	6.40	3.84
Dist. of Columbia	16.21	9.24	8.80	3.23
Maryland	14.02	5.98	6.85	1.33
New Jersey	15.62	7.51	7.47	2.16
Pennsylvania	19.85	7.56	10.41	2.03
Virginia	13.27	7.21	7.63	3.18
Virgin Islands	30.50	11.18	12.13	2.24

TABLE 2.—FISCAL YEAR 1984 ACTIVE CASE AND DOLLAR ERROR RATES—Continued

State	Percent of cases in error		Percent of dollars in error	
	Overissuances [1]	Underissuances	Overpayments [1]	Underissuances
West Virginia	15.76	6.19	6.95	1.53
MARO	16.65	7.13	8.57	2.13
Alabama	18.18	6.76	13.35	2.98
Florida	15.70	8.60	9.00	2.48
Georgia	19.77	7.13	9.57	3.42
Kentucky	17.21	7.88	8.98	2.03
Mississippi	20.65	6.68	9.24	1.90
North Carolina	12.28	9.63	7.22	3.51
South Carolina	23.10	8.27	10.90	3.68
Tennessee	14.08	6.73	6.09	2.04
SERO	17.34	7.70	9.28	2.69
Illinois	19.64	7.34	8.31	2.92
Indiana	18.10	5.92	8.64	1.74
Michigan	13.75	6.25	6.46	1.54
Minnesota	16.74	5.98	9.77	2.10
Ohio	16.15	4.98	6.65	1.73
Wisconsin	15.12	7.89	9.60	3.20
MWRO	16.22	6.14	7.55	2.11
Arkansas	17.23	5.95	9.66	2.23
Louisiana	17.17	7.66	10.16	1.71
New Mexico	19.83	7.95	11.83	2.23
Oklahoma	12.56	8.58	7.61	3.45
Texas	16.68	6.36	9.97	1.67
SWRO	16.59	6.96	9.89	1.94
Colorado	17.35	6.95	10.66	2.03
Iowa	17.57	5.97	8.51	1.54
Kansas	14.19	5.50	7.35	2.31
Missouri	16.28	7.29	5.83	1.98
Montana	18.13	6.88	8.77	2.16
Nebraska	16.08	6.14	8.79	1.94
North Dakota	10.06	3.61	6.27	.64
South Dakota	12.16	5.43	3.59	.94
Utah	16.89	8.62	11.43	2.77
Wyoming	17.50	7.12	9.08	2.69
MPRO	16.28	6.64	7.78	1.95
Alaska	16.36	11.77	9.29	1.89
Arizona	21.02	9.40	9.38	3.36
California	12.38	7.74	7.67	2.83
Guam	13.71	8.53	3.39	1.12
Hawaii	8.93	4.08	3.69	1.06
Idaho	15.40	5.83	6.88	1.81
Nevada	3.59	.75	2.54	.16
Oregon	13.99	5.12	9.18	2.05
Washington	16.09	6.72	9.23	2.59
WRO	13.52	7.21	7.83	2.53
U.S. total	16.28	7.09	8.64	2.34

[1] Includes overissuances and issuances to ineligibles.

TABLE 10.—NEGATIVE ACTIONS: CASELOAD, SAMPLE COMPLETION, AND ERROR RATE BY STATE OCTOBER 1982 TO SEPTEMBER 1983

Region and State	Caseload	Completed sample reviews	
	Average monthly actions	Actions	Percent in error
United States	416,863	61,622	2.85
NORTHEAST			
Connecticut	1,410	461	.23
Maine	2,848	1,052	1.79
Massachusetts	4,785	1,435	1.26

TABLE 10.—NEGATIVE ACTIONS: CASELOAD, SAMPLE COMPLETION, AND ERROR RATE BY STATE OCTOBER 1982 TO SEPTEMBER 1983—Continued

Region and State	Caseload	Completed sample reviews	
	Average monthly actions	Actions	Percent in error
New Hampshire	1,239	511	.97
New York	43,532	617	2.07
Rhode Island	3,024	552	1.45
Vermont	883	409	2.42
MID-ATLANTIC			
Delaware	990	321	.68
Dist. of Col.	929	417	1.44
Maryland	4,173	1,291	3.58
New Jersey	9,621	1,745	1.28
Pennsylvania	22,130	1,665	2.54
Virginia	7,619	1,752	1.88
Virgin Islands	122	246	4.14
West Virginia	2,986	991	1.11
SOUTHEAST			
Alabama	11,851	1,707	1.88
Florida	9,837	1,650	.89
Georgia	9,654	1,328	1.50
Kentucky	11,028	1,512	1.42
Mississippi	4,596	1,618	1.10
North Carolina	10,538	1,680	2.50
South Carolina	7,783	1,572	2.85
Tennessee	7,572	1,620	2.05
MIDWEST			
Illinois	26,114	1,653	2.33
Indiana	5,374	1,705	2.45
Michigan	30,982	1,788	4.10
Minnesota	3,453	1,318	8.28
Ohio	8,304	1,879	5.01
Wisconsin	14.508	1,989	2.06
SOUTHWEST			
Arkansas	6,675	1,852	.05
Louisiana	9,993	1,854	1.54
New Mexico	2,749	984	1.37
Oklahoma	5,613	1,463	5.22
Texas	35,056	1,080	4.93
MOUNTAIN PLAINS			
Colorado	3,281	1,063	1.50
Iowa	4,419	1,190	3.70
Kansas	3,780	1,298	3.70
Missouri	3,600	1,685	1.18
Montana	1,080	491	3.06
Nebraska	1,474	638	.30
North Dakota	821	411	1.41
South Dakota	1,209	530	1.95
Utah	3,288	1,135	2.61
Wyoming	517	325	2.46
WESTERN			
Alaska	1,227	556	3.57
Arizona	4,620	1,519	3.35
California	42,316	1,446	4.15
Guam	120	246	2.40
Hawaii	1,566	698	2.37
Idaho	2,240	818	1.93
Nevada	2,100	776	1.16
Oregon	3,024	1,273	4.13
Washington	8,210	1,802	5.52

Question. Ms. Barwinski's written testimony reveals that persons in institutions are not receiving pre-release applications for food stamps as required by the Omnibus Drug Bill enacted in October. What is the Department's schedule for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this new legislative mandate to assure that combined SSI/Food Stamp prerelease applications are completed for persons about to be discharged from institutions?

Answer. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) staff met with staff from the Social Security Administration (SSA) in November 1986, to plan for implementation of the pre-release provisions in the Omnibus Drug Bill. It was decided that SSA would issue instructions to its staff on how to process these applications and, once this has been done, that FNS will notify its regional offices so that the new procedure can be communicated to the States. Staff also agreed to explore separately alternatives for meeting the requirement for a single application and then to meet again on this issue. Since it will take longer to address the single application requirement, it was decided that the procedures for processing the SSI/Food Stamp per-release applications should be implemented prior to the resolution of the application issue.

To date, SSA has issued a program circular to its field offices advising them of the upcoming new procedures. SSA has prepared instructions and will issue these as soon as they are cleared—sometime this spring. SSA will send FNS an advance copy of the instructions so that FNS can disseminate this information to its regional offices. FNS staff expects to meet with SSA staff in April to discuss more fully options for meeting the requirement for a single application.

Question. As requested by your staff, I would like to clarify a request I made during the hearing: Please submit for the hearing record a listing of FNS and HNIS studies on domestic food assistance programs which have either been planned or are currently in process. The committee is specifically interested in study objectives, cost estimates, schedules for completion, and the consulting firms contracted to conduct these studies.

Answer. I am providing a description of current contracted studies on domestic food assistance programs. Each study description identifies project objectives, the estimated completion date, study contractor if applicable, and estimated total costs. Costs are omitted, however, for those fiscal year 1987 studies which have not reached the contract award stage. Since FNS staff are in the process of negotiating contracts, publicizing cost information at this time could jeopardize the Government's negotiating position. Plans for fiscal year 1988 aren't final at this time. Thus, I am listing area of future evaluation and demonstration activity rather than specific studies.

Fiscal Year 1987

CURRENT STUDIES

Food Stamp Program

Food Stamp Analytic Studies.—$500,000—Abt Associates.

These efforts involve secondary analyses of data to examine the role of PSP in the context of several assistance programs serving the same population and to study the dynamics of food stamp receipt and patterns of food choice. Contract expires September 1988.

Support for SIPP.—$300,000—InterAgency transfer to Census.

This survey data provides FNS with detailed information on the sources and amount of income earned/not earned by FSP participants and nonparticipants.

Quick Response Studies.—$2,000,000—Urban Institute.

These are short-term projects resulting from legislative requirements and FSP information needs on program operations. These are separate tasks to provide States with employment and training technical assistance, assess the new homeless provisions and evaluate categorical eligibility. Completion expected December 1988.

Quality Control Error Rates.—$99,000—Westat.

This pays for consulting services on quality control sampling issues. Completion expected spring 1987.

Evaluation of State Initiated Projects.—$600,000—Applied Management Sciences.

Three error reduction demonstrations are being assessed. These include a computer assisted interview procedure, an eligibility work training course on interview skills, and the use of video messages targeted on recipient reporting. Completion expected spring 1987.

Microsimulation 1986-87.—$2,300,000—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

This is an on-going effort to estimate the effects of potential changes to the FSP on the number and characteristics of eligibles and participants. Contract expires May 1987.

Store Investigation and Monitoring.—$550,000—Analytic Systems, Inc.

This project will develop, implement, and test an automated inquiry system for accessing the Minneapolis data base and for screening stores against the violation prone profile at the time of authorization. Completion expected May 1987.

One Tier Quality Control Demonstration.—$548,000—Transfer to state agencies for demonstration costs.

The purpose of this project is to determine the feasibility, costs, accuracy, and timeliness of a single stage federally operated quality control system for the PSP. Completion expected summer 1988.

Feasibility of Off-Line Technology Applications to the Food Stamp Program.—$300,000—Electronic Strategy Associates.

Primary objective is to assess to technical and economical feasibility of off-line electronic benefit transfer applications. Completion expected summer of 1987.

Evaluation of Electronic Benefit Transfer Demonstration.—$1,600,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Major objective is to assess the impacts of electronic benefit delivery on FNP costs, food retailers, recipients, and financial institutions. The final report is in clearance.

Evaluation of the Extended Electronic Benefit Transfer Demonstration.—$900,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Focus of the study is to measure and compare the costs of the original EBT demonstration to the costs of the electronic benefit tranfer system after hardware and software changes are made and functions are integrated with other welfare agency services.

Program Operations Study.—$2,000,000—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Three objectives are being pursued: assessment of specific State and local program operations; evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of alternative approaches; and detailed description of successful and unscussful procedures. Completion expected later summer 1987.

Evaluation of Effective Front End Matching.—$650,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Study will examine 10 best practice systems to determine the relative costs and benefits of operation and any organizational prerequisities. Completion expected in winter 1988.

Food Stamp Program Certification Costs.—$1,000,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Research objectives are to develop comparable measures of total certification costs; identify the contribution of uncontrollable factors; and develop adjustment factors that account for the influence of these external factors. Completion expected spring 1988.

Child Nutrition

Child Care Study.—$1,500,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Descriptive study of Child Care Food Program sponsors, providers, and families who participate in the program. A representative national sample is being studied. Completion expected winter 1988.

Income Verification.—$1,400,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Current effects and costs of National School Lunch Program income verification requirements including misreporting, are being examined in a nationally representative sample of school districts. Completion expected fall 1988.

Commodity Donation Study.—$3,750,000—Virginia Tech.

$150,000 spent in fiscal year 1987 to continue funding for monitoring school food authorities who participated in the study of alternatives to commodity distribution and who continue to receive cash or letters of credit in lieu of commodities. Completion expected summer 1987.

Summer Food Service Program Study.—$700,000—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Characteristics of sponsors, sites, and meals in the Food Service Program are being described for a nationally representative sample. Completion expected spring 1987.

Child Nutrition Analysis/Modeling.—$500,000—Urban Institute.

Study will develop models of program cost and preparation using data gathered in previous studies and information from the sources such as the Census Bureau. Completion expected fall 1987.

School Food Purchase Survey.—$860,000—Applied Management Sciences.

Study provides national estimates of school food purchases, amounts of commodities acquired, and description of food purchase procedures. Completion expected May 1987.

State Commodity Distribution Systems Evaluation.—$400,000—Abel, Daft & Earley, Inc.

The major objective of the study is to assess the cost-effectiveness of the various food distribution systems in place. Completion expected summer 1987.

WIC

Benefit Targeting.—$760,000—Cosmos Corporation.

Case study of exemplary practices used by local WIC agencies in reaching high-risk pregnant women and increasing their numbers in WIC caseloads. Subsequently, phases will test feasibility, transferability, and effectiveness in other local WIC sites and provide materials and training for broad based dissemination. Completion expected summer 1989.

CDC Smoking Reduction Study.—$610,000—Interagency transfer to CDC.

FNS is supporting extension of CDC's smoking cessation during pregnancy project from prenatal clinics to associated WIC programs. CDC will develop and test in up to 3 States smoking-cessation interventions appropriate for use in WIC clinics. Completion expected winter 1989.

WIC Analytic Studies.—$800,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Contract provides for both specified and ad hoc policy-relevant analyses concerning WIC. Data bases used include Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), National WIC Evaluation and the 1984 WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study. Completion expected spring 1990.

National Maternal and Infant Health Survey.—$250,000—Interagency transfer to Health and Human Services.

(Formerly National Natality Survey) FNS is providing support to this large-scale DHHS survey of child-bearing women and their infants. It will collect extensive data on medical, behavioral, and socioeconomic factors influencing pregnancy and birth outcomes. At FNS request, questions on WIC participation will be included. Survey activities end fall 1990.

WIC Administrative Funds Management Study.—$370,000—Abt Associates, Inc.

Study objectives are to identify factors that influence costs and service quality, particularly strategies for controlling costs while maintaining program quality. Expected Completion is winter 1988.

WIC Vendor Management.—$750,000—Professional Management Associates.

The project will identify vendor management activities associated with the detection and deterrence of WIC vendor fraud. Completion expected winter 1988.

WIC Vendor Identification Project.—$128,000—American Management Systems, Inc.

The objective is to identify cost-effective technologies for capture of the vendor identification number on WIC food instruments. Completion expected spring 1987.

WIC Eligibility Estimation.—$270,000—Sigma One.

Study provides 1979 estimates of the WIC eligible population by various categories and 1984 estimates at the national level. Final report in clearance.

WIC Income Verification.—$900,000—Quality Planning Corporation.

Study is intended to estimate the extent to which income misreporting currently exists and test improved ways of certifying income eligibility. Completion expected fall 1988.

WIC Breastfeeding promotion Study.—$570,000—Development Associates, Inc.

Purposes of the study are to identify effective breastfeeding promotion models and adopt models for applicability to a wide range of WIC participants. Completion expected fall 1989.

HNIS Activities

Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII).—$2,500,000—National Analysts.

Survey developed to conform with implementation plan for comprehensive National Nutrition Monitoring System. Data to be collected include household and individual characteristics, elements associated with food consumption, and six recalls of food and beverage intakes. Completion expected spring 1987.

Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1978.—$6,000,000—National Analysts.

This is a decennial survey designed to provide cross-sectional measures of household food consumption of individual household members for the United States by geographic region and season. Completion expected spring 1988.

STUDIES FOR WHICH CONTRACTS ARE BEING NEGOTIATED

Food Stamps

Microsimulation *1987-88.*

In addition to the on-going effort to estimate the effects of potential changes to the FSP on eligibles and participants, 1987-88 microsimulation efforts will involve the development and implementation of enhancements to the analytic model.

Employment and Training Program Evaluation.

This study will assess the operations and effects of the State employment and training programs required by the Food Security Act of 1985.

Compliance Investigation Demonstration.

This demonstration will test the feasibility of several approaches to contracting with private sector investigators for compliance investigations.

Analysis of Nutrition Survey Data (CSFII).

This study will examine food consumption patterns and nutritional adequacy of diets among food program participants, low-income nonparticipants and higher income persons.

Error Reduction.

This project will demonstrate the usefulness of new management tools to reduce error. These techniques include the application of case closing data to identify what administrative actions lead to correctly closed or continued cases.

Employment and Training Analyses.

The purpose is to identify the long-term unemployed, their characteristics, and barriers to employment they may face.

Child Nutrition

Child Nutrition Program Operations Study.

Planned study to examine severe need reimbursements, commodity issues, meal quality, and meal cost for National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program school food authorities.

WIC

WIC Characteristics Survey.

Survey will describe current WIC participants and services. Study will also assess the feasibility of obtaining income and nutritional risk data in a fixed format from State and local WIC agencies based on their regular data collection activities.

FISCAL YEAR 1988 EVALUATIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

For fiscal year 1988 the Food and Nutrition Service plans to conduct evaluations and demonstrations which will address the most pressing issues facing the agency. Evaluations will focus on assessing the effectiveness and cost of current practices used to administer and operate the agency's programs. Demonstrations will test those innovations to current practices which show promise in improving program efficiency and integrity. The following are examples of research topics under consideration for fiscal year 1988:

Food Stamp Program

Improving Food Stamp Program Operations through Technology.

Recent technological innovations show considerable promise for improving Food Stamp Program operations and reducing administrative costs. These include automation of various activities such as certification, benefit issuance, and case management. We plan to conduct studies on how well technological improvements have and can be adapted to improve program administration.

Quick Response Studies.

These studies will be aimed at expeditiously addressing issues such as program operations, that may arise during the course of the year. Many such issues require prompt attention if the results are to be useful in advising policy decisions.

Child Nutrition

Dietary Assessment of Child Nutrition Program.

These studies will focus on the nutritional impact of child nutrition programs on their participants.

WIC

Improving WIC Administration.

These studies will focus on improving the WIC Program through automation, targeting, and other methods.

Design/Feasibility of a WIC Child Impact Study.

This contract will provide funding for development of alternative designs for a study of the impacts of WIC on children and examine the feasibility of the alternative approaches. If a second, feasible design is identified, then a full research project may be implemented.

HNIS

Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals.

Survey will be developed to conform with the implementation plan for comprehensive national nutrition monitoring system. Data to be collected include all sex groups and groups for basic and low-income households.

Question. As you are aware, the Food Security Act of 1985 directed State food stamp agencies to develop a method for certifying and issuing coupons to eligible homeless households. What efforts has the department taken to collect and distribute sample State policy memoranda, such as those received by the select committee from Missouri and Massachusetts to ensure the implementation of this requirement?

What plans does the department have for monitoring State compliance with the new requirements?

Answer. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has issued regulations which outline procedures to ensure that food stamp benefits are made available to eligible homeless households. The State agencies' implementation of regulations concerning the certification and issuance of food stamp benefits to homeless households is monitored by FNS regional offices through the management evaluation (ME) review process. State agencies which fail to implement required regulations according to FNS policy and guidelines face adverse action which may result in a disallowance of a portion of FNS administrative funds.

In addition, FNS communicates and shares successful techniques by State agencies nationwide through its operation awareness campaign. FNS will continue to stress the importance of ensuring that eligible households received benefits and will share information on State agencies' efforts in this area.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bode appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 98.]

Chairman LELAND. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. It is my understanding that in the past, the Department has opposed any change in the household definition used to determine food stamp eligibility.

How does the Department plan to consider this issue as a result of the testimony today, numerous comments and the select committee report's recommendations which reveal that the household definition poses an unfair hardship on homeless families who are forced to move in with relatives but do not share resources for the purchase and preparation of food with these relatives?

Mr. BODE. Mr. Chairman, I think you may recall that that provision of the law was enacted because household definition that was an area of particular abuse in the Food Stamp Program. Moreover, it has been our view that before turning to their fellow citizens and taxpayers to provide assistance, assistance should first be provided by the family of anyone who is experiencing difficult times. When the family is able they should provide that assistance.

And that, as well as the particular vulnerability to abuse that exists with household definition situations, has been the basis for our opposition to liberalizing the household definition rules.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Secretary, one of the problems we have is that we're finding more and more people testifying before us and other committees saying that, in fact, that is not sufficient. Even though you might automatically assume that relatives can make up for all the needs left unmet by the public sector, the fact of the

matter is that their needs are not being met. The children are the ones who are being hit the hardest by these circumstances.

Do you have any comment? Perhaps I should ask how you personally feel about this. That might not be fair, however.

Mr. BODE. My personal opinions are reflected in the views of the administration. I'm very honored to serve as a part of it. In the administration's view, there is always difficulty when Government intervention occurs in any economic situation.

Whether Government's intervention precedes or follows, assistance provided by other members of the family is always a difficult matter. Once Government assistance starts, Government is having an effect that effectively precedes family support. We feel it's most appropriate to include in the household definition the members of the family residing together, because it takes into consideration the overall situation of the family.

In that way, Government's effort follows the role of the family as the first reservoir resources, if you will, for support. Certainly Government ought to help by following family assistance when it's needed after family members have not been able to address those needs.

But we don't think it's appropriate for Government to precede help from the family.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Bode, have you heard from families who assist their relatives by allowing them to share crowded housing, but are not able to assist their relatives with all of their economic needs?

Mr. BODE. Sir, I'm aware of the testimony that's been provided to the Congress to that effect as well as I've encountered situations myself. I try to get outside of Washington and talk with people about what's going on.

I should point out that there are times when those household budgets are stretched by the addition of new members who are seeking assistance from their family. In such cases, the new, expanded household is eligible for assistance.

So, that basic level of Government effort following the provision of resources available to the family does occur.

Chairman LELAND. I'm aware that the Food and Nutrition Service has developed a system of quality control to minimize error rates in the Food Stamp Program.

How is the Department using this system to assure that first, eligible persons are not denied food stamp benefits erroneously; second, that collateral contacts, are used for persons who have difficulty meeting the programs documentation requirements; and third, that persons receive expedited services when they are eligible.

Mr. BODE. I want to be sure to be complete.

Chairman LELAND. The first question is: How is the Department using this system of quality control to assure that eligible persons are not denied food stamp benefits erroneously?

Please identify, or have your colleague identify herself, for the record.

Mr. BODE. OK. Mr. Chairman, this is Bonnie O'Neill with the Food and Nutrition Service.

Chairman LELAND. Welcome, Ms. O'Neill.

Mr. BODE. As I know you're well aware, the quality control system is a very important mechanism for assuring that the Food Stamp Program works the way it's supposed to.

There are times when we have Federal rules that are not uniformly applied. And that's one of the reasons in my testimony I refer to four times that we have gone out to our regions to have them work with the States directly to be sure that homeless eligibility is present.

The quality control system is not our only mechanism for assuring that program rules are followed. We also have management evaluations where personnel meet with State and local officials to review procedures and attempt to assure that the rules are being followed.

We measure rates of under-issuance in the Food Stamp Program where people are not provided the level of food stamps they are supposed to be provided. That rate is approximately 2 percent. And, of course, that's a very serious concern of ours.

It happens that there tends to be, though it's not a well developed correlation, a relationship such that the greatest rates of under-issuance, if you will, coincide with the greatest rates of over-issuance.

As a matter of operations, we have not found tough administration to cause a ratcheting down and denial of benefits to eligible people. Instead, it's a matter of faulty procedures not accurately retrieving information and processing the information that's provided.

By attacking over-issuance, we're finding we're also working down the rates of under-issuance.

I'd like to ask Ms. O'Neill to help me.

Chairman LELAND. Sure.

Ms. O'NEILL. Is this on?

Chairman LELAND. The microphone is on.

Ms. O'NEILL. OK. I'll just mention the QC system does have a few parts that the Secretary mentioned and one is to look specifically at denials and terminations. And every State must do a sample, a statistically valid sample, of that portion of the case load.

We don't always review that sample, but we do, on occasions, check to make sure that the States are properly applying all the rules. And we now are undertaking an effort to look at least two States in each region to make sure that they are correctly following our procedures.

Mr. BODE. Mr. Chairman, if I may, your question was a very thorough one. And I would request permission to more fully respond for the record. I think we can do a better job of providing a more complete record. And, of course, we're very eager to know if the committee feels we ought to be doing something differently in terms of assuring compliance with the food stamp policies.

We try to be very conscientious about seeing that it's adhered to.

Chairman LELAND. Very good. Then we will, without objection, leave the entire question open for the record for the purpose of receiving your comments in writing, Mr. Secretary.

Let me continue by asking, it is my understanding that you are preparing to release final interim regulations for the new legislation passed in the Omnibus drug bill which would permit homeless

persons to utilize their food stamps for hot meals at nonprofit soup kitchens and shelters.

Can you tell us about the process that was used in developing these regulations, when you expect them to be issued, and how you plan to incorporate comments you have received?

Mr. BODE. Mr. Chairman, we intend to issue those regulations on what we refer to as an interim final basis. In that way, as soon as we get them published, they will be available for implementation. At the same time, we will collect comments from the public before finalizing those rules.

Rather than going through the regular publication of a proposed rule, getting comments on it and then following that comment period, publishing a final rule that's implemented, we want to go right ahead with implementation. Then, based on comments, we will modify the rule where appropriate.

We plan to consult with staff of the House Agriculture Committee, being the authorizing committee, for the Food Stamp Program, on Friday about these regulations.

We're now at a stage where we can do that. We're eager to have their input. If staff from your committee would be interested in attending, and of course any member, we'd be delighted to do that. We would be pleased to consult with you and receive your counsel on those regulations.

We want to go ahead in that way to meet the expectation of the statute for April 1, 1987 implementation.

Chairman LELAND. I appreciate that. We will communicate with you in the future on the implementation of this legislation.

Mr. BODE. I neglected, Mr. Chairman, to point out that we did interview food stamp recipients and center organizers in the District of Columbia in trying to quickly get that regulation drafted.

Also, we had the benefit of work we had previously done. You may recall that when I testified before you last, we discussed a demonstration project to test food stamp availability in centers. We started to work on such a demonstration project. However, this law overtook that.

Chairman LELAND. Very good.

Lastly, Mr. Bode, I would like to request that you submit for the hearing record a listing of FNS and HNIS studies on domestic food assistance programs which have either been planned or are currently in process.

The committee is specifically interested in study objectives, most cost estimates, schedules for completion and the consulting firms contracted to conduct these studies, if you will.

Mr. BODE. Yes, sir.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you.

Let me now yield to Mr. Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, you spoke a moment ago about under-issuance and over-issuance. Let's talk about where there's nonissuance, particularly among people who qualify. As you know, there's always a report in somebody's publication about low food stamp paticipation rates among qualifying groups at high risk of hunger.

Has your agency thought about or given thought to encouraging some sort of legislation that could be heard by this committee, or

some other committee, to deal with that, and to deal with it in such a way that you would be providing targeted information to these high risk groups at an increased rate, I mean, so that people are being reached and the information is going out.

Mr. BODE. Yes, Congressman. In terms of outreach activities, I'm aware that the House Agriculture Committee, yesterday, in subcommittee, adopted a provision that would provide for optional outreach by State activities.

Our experience with outreach has been that it is not an effective mechanism. People are aware of the Food Stamp Program. Certainly they don't understand all of the provisions of the Food Stamp Program, but they are aware of the program and are generally aware of where to go to find out about it.

So we have not encouraged expansion of outreach activities.

I should also note that, generally speaking, the rate of nonpatication by eligible food stamp households is about the same as it has been for a number of years since it increased following elimination of the purchase requirement in 1979.

Prior to elimination of the purchase requirement, our rates of nonparticipation among eligibles were well below 50 percent. Now the rate of participation by eligibles is in excess of 60 percent.

There are many reasons, of course, why some people choose or do not to make application.

Mr. MFUME. Could you give us some of those reasons?

Mr. BODE. Well, I think they're about as numerous as the number of people——

Mr. MFUME. Just give me two.

Mr. BODE. I think that some people prefer not to receive Government assistance, and that is a reason that is most common in the upper ends of the income eligibility criteria.

Some people prefer not to use food stamps in a grocery store. They simply do not want to be seen using food stamps. That is, I'm sure, a reason you have heard, as I have. Those are two quick ones that spring to mind.

Mr. MFUME. Does USDA support, then, the optional plan, the State by State optional plan?

Mr. BODE. Our concern about that is exclusively one of budget. We'd like to see expenditures reduced wherever possible in terms of meeting the budget goals of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings requirement. And it is projected to have a modest increase in program costs.

We'd like to see those costs reduced somewhere else to compensate for projected cost increase. We don't have a policy objection to optional outreach provisions.

Mr. MFUME. But you do object to mandatory outreach?

Mr. BODE. Yes, sir, we do. Our experience with outreach has been it is of questionable effectiveness. To mandate that States undertake it is very likely to result in some classic cases of Federal requirements forcing some unnecessary and, in some situations, silly requirements.

We think discretion at the State level in these activities makes good sense. States differ dramatically. So, giving States discretion in how or whether they undertake those activities would be most reasonable.

Mr. MFUME. OK. I don't have any further questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you, Mr. Mfume.

Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Bode, a kind of a followup to Mr. Mfume's question, even though you do not support mandatory outreach, the question I have is in relationship to the Food Security Act of 1985 which directed stated food stamp agencies to develop methods for certifying and issuing coupons to eligible homeless households, has the Department effectively been able to implement some type of monitoring mechanism to assure that the program is in effect and doing what it ought to be doing?

I mean, there were numerous complaints in terms of the program, and I'm sure that the administration is making its best effort. But, as you know, when the moneys come in to the individual States, there is a lot of variance in terms of how it is implemented.

And what is your agency doing, in particular, in relationship to try and monitor to make sure that, like Massachusetts and Missouri which have submitted plans, other States will do the same thing?

Mr. BODE. Mr. Flake, I'm sorry. I didn't understand. Missouri and Massachusetts plans for what? Do you recall which type of plan that is?

Mr. FLAKE. Yes. They have developed their memorandum within their own State and developed it with the USDA, and other States have not followed suit. Is that because there has not been a mandatory enforcement? Or is that not an area of concern as it relates to trying to implement the directed mandate of the Food Service Security Act?

Mr. BODE. Mr. Flake, all States are required to have operational plans. Our regional offices have worked with all States in reviewing State policy manuals to assure accurate interpretation of the Federal regulations.

Of course, I'm not going to pretend that we're perfect in every phase of implementing this complex program. I'm afraid that I'm not sure exactly what plans you are referring to. As you know, there are many sets of memos——

Mr. FLAKE. I understand.

Mr. BODE.We'd be delighted to follow up and work with you and your staff as you feel it is appropriate to pursue this matter.

Mr. FLAKE. OK. And I think you can make that response a part of his statement that he submits for the record, Mr. Chairman. Please add that to the information that you have already requested.

Chairman LELAND. Without objection, the record will remain open for that purpose.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bode, you may recall that our office took up with you a problem with regard to food stamps and the homeless, and I'd like you to comment on it. I've been greatly concerned by the suffering that's being caused by the implementation of a provision of the

Food Security Act among the users of emergency shelters throughout our Nation.

The homeless are in need of nutritional benefits available under the Food Stamp Program, as we're all aware. But because of what I consider to be an unwise interpretation of a section of Puplic Law 99-198, they're not receiving the full benefits they are clearly in need of.

Under that provision, and I quote:

> Assistance provided to a third party on behalf of a household by a State or local government shall be considered money payable directly to the household if the assistance is provided in lieu of (a) a regular benefit payable to the household for living expenses under a State plan for Aid to Families with Dependent Children approved under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or (b) a benefit payable to the household for living expenses under (1) a State or local general assistance program, or (2) another basic assistance program comparable to general assistance as determined by the Secretary.

Now that determination is explicitly not applicable to various benefits including assistance provided by a State or local housing authority or, I quote, "* * * emergency and special assistance to the extent excluded in regulations prescribed by the Secretary."

However, because housing assistance provided to the homeless is almost always provided by agencies that deal with emergencies, this aid does not automatically fall under the housing exemption.

And as of this writing, your discretion to quality shelters assistance for the homeless as emergency assistance has not been exercised. And I believe that you should try to work out this immediately for a number of reasons. Our primary concern, of course, is for the affected parties. They are a nutritionally vulnerable segment of our population and they should not bear the brunt of this kind of a policy.

In most instances, they do not receive their housing allowance directly. Instead, it is provided by the operators of the shelters. In many instances, the cost of that housing is so high that people who formerly received assistance under the Food Stamp Program are finding, through the loss of their housing, that they are also being forced to bear an unbearable cut in their food stamp allotment.

And I don't think that was the intent of the Congress in passing the Food Security Act.

In addition, I don't believe that after full consideration, you can fail to agree that these unfortunate individuals, who must reside in emergency housing, should be exempt from this provision of the Food Security Act. And I would hope that you would clarify your position with regard to this and see what we can do to correct this problem.

Mr. BODE. Thank you, Mr. Gilman. We have exercised our authority to declare a portion of the payment provided to the shelter provider in the so-called welfare hotels as emergency and special assistance. It's the portion that exceeds the regular shelter component of the AFDC grant that is excluded.

In that way, people residing in those so-called welfare hotels receive the same amount of food stamps as a similar household with the same number of people and the same income would receive if they resided somewhere else.

In other words, the additional money paid for providing housing in those so-called welfare hotels is not counted as income in the Food Stamp Program. But instead, only the same amount as would be counted as income in other households not residing in that situation anywhere across the country is counted.

Of course, in New York, we had a misunderstanding where the State and regional office of the Food and Nutrition Service had a misunderstanding of the facts. This resulted in New York incorrectly implementing the Food Stamp Act, thereby providing additional benefits beyond that provided for in food stamp policy.

That policy has been very consistently applied before the 1985 farm bill. When the correct facts were discovered, New York was informed. This occurred during the beginning stages of consideration of the 1985 farm bill and was discussed. The 1985 farm bill simply reiterates the longstanding policy of the Department of Agriculture in this matter. Last fall, and New York began to implement correctly the rules that had been in effect throughout the rest of the country.

Mr. GILMAN. Well, I think we all recognize that when a family is put into one of these emergency shelters, they then have an additional burden of not having refrigeration, and not having kitchen facilities.

So they are then impacted further by having to go out into the marketplace and go to restaurants and purchase their food which is extremely burdensome and they have to expend a great deal more than they ordinarily would spend.

What are we doing to help alleviate that burden?

Mr. BODE. Well, Mr. Gilman, of course the basic problem is the inadequate housing that is present.

Mr. GILMAN. We recognize that's why they're there. And that's why we're seeking some emergency relief with regard to the food stamps. Frankly, I'm a little bit concerned. You don't approve of this legislation that's before us, and yet the administration hasn't come up with a good alternative at this point.

In addition, not only not coming up with a proper alternative, but we're also imposing an additional burden on these families.

Mr. BODE. Additional burden?

Mr. GILMAN. By not having adequate food stamps to take care of the additional cost of having to go out and obtain their meals. Not being able to cook them in these inadequate facilities.

Mr. BODE. We feel that it's appropriate, Mr. Gilman, for the State and locality to meet its responsibilities in providing housing assistance.

Mr. GILMAN. But States and localities are telling us they need help to do that. And that's why we're providing this kind of a measure until we see some other alternative measure coming from the administration to help the States and local governments.

They're saying that, yes, they'll do some things but they'll need some help from the Federal Government to do it.

Chairman LELAND. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I'll be pleased to yield.

Chairman LELAND. Mr. Bode, in a situation such as in my city of Houston where the economy is in a depression right now, what can

the local government do and what is the responsibility of the Federal Government in protecting the citizens of our Nation.

Mr. BODE. Mr. Chairman, I'm afraid I lack expertise in the housing area. However, I know that there are substantial Federal money provided to assist States and localities in addressing housing needs.

If I may backup one step in addressing the matter, is when the fundamental problem is a housing problem. I think there's widespread agreement on that point with respect to the New York situation. Addressing the problem through a nationally uniform food program that is a very cumbersome, very inefficient and, in many situations, very ineffective.

Of course, the Food Stamp Program responds to the food assistance needs of places like Houston that are experiencing severe economic problems. As those eaconomic situations cause people to have lower incomes, those people become eligible for food stamps.

Chairman LELAND. You and I talked about this before and we've talked about the interdependency of the two different factions here, if you will. Hopefully we will pursue the idea that I had about bringing several Federal agencies together to come to a consensus about this.

Hopefully, we will convince you that the food assistance needs of the homeless should be the concern of USDA. But I hope that your opinion on this issue is not set in concrete. What I see happening here is no Federal agency looking at the problem of homelessness in its totality. Innocent people have become the victims of the interagency battles reflected by your opinion on this issue.

Mr. BODE. And, Mr. Chairman, you know, it seems that in all of these discussions, it makes a case very well for addressing our overall welfare system. We have fragmented programs with varying responsibilities at different levels of Government.

The Food Stamp Program, because it's paid for exclusively by the Federal Government, is a very favorite avenue for fixing problems, especially as recommended by Governors and the States. They're very eager to see problems addressed through the Food Stamp Program because they don't have to worry about the budgeting for it.

So I would be delighted, as I indicated before, to participate in such a meeting. I spoke with my counterpart at the Department of Housing and Urban Development and they too will be pleased to participate. And I look forward to having your call.

Chairman LELAND. I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. GILMAN. You know, Mr. Bode, when you talk about the local governments should be fulfilling their needs, let me just point out to you that in the last few weeks when we had some testimony before the Housing Committee, our county executive from one of our most affluent counties in the entire Nation, Westchester County in New York, appeared before that committee and testified that we had some 2,800 homeless in Westchester County which has a population of less than a million.

But he said even more disturbing than the aggregate numbers of homeless was the rate of growth of the homeless in that region. And I quote from that report.

From January 1985 to January 1986, the number of homeless families in Westchester County in New York increased by 46 percent. Since 1983, our budget for

emergency housing has mushroomed from $750,000 per annum to over $18 million in 1986.

And in 1987, Westchester County projects a cost of $32 million, an increase of 44 percent in one year.

This is typical of what's happening around our Nation. And when we say our local governments should resolve it, local government, as you know, is having its own problems with their budgets. And when they have that kind of an increase, and that severe a burden imposed on them in a very short period of time, they certainly do look to the Federal Government for some additional assistance.

And what I'm saying to you is that not only are we not providing that kind of an initiative from the administration's viewpoint, but now we're imposing additional burdens by not picking up the kind of help we should be picking up in just the Food Stamp Program.

So, again, I ask you to take another look at that program and see what we can do to be of assistance to the families. And most of these are families, incidentally—70 percent of these people, the county executive we're talking about, were of a family unit.

We're putting families in emergency shelters. They have to go out and feed their family in a different manner than if they had their own kitchen available to do it.

So I think that certainly is indicative of the need that should be addressed by your Department.

Mr. BODE. Mr. Gilman, I, of course, approach the meeting that the chairman intends to convene with an open mind. And we are eager to address the matter and will work at it as best we can.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Bode. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LELAND. I thank you very much, Mr. Bode, and your colleague. I appreciate your cooperation.

I'm going to beg the committee's indulgence. We have one last panel of witnesses who will come before us. We must expedite our proceedings because we are supposed to vacate the room very soon. However, I'm going to try and extend our time in this room so that we can complete our hearing and receive testimony from all of our witnesses.

I'd like to introduce Ms. Sara Barwinski, a social worker at Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri. Ms. Barwinski traveled up with Ms. Jones and her son who testified earlier.

Ms. Barwinski works with homeless persons at a day service center and a transitional housing program for homeless families and children.

As chairperson of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare's Hunger Task Force, she can provide information to the committee on barriers to participation in the Food Stamp Program for the homeless throughout Missouri.

Before you proceed, let me also introduce, and have come forward as well, the other two experts who are here to testify before our committee. Dr. Karen Benker is the former director of the New York City Program for Homeless Families of the City Department of Health.

She will testify today from investigations she has conducted on the health and nutrition effects of homelessness on children and families. She will also discuss the barriers to participation in the

Federal Food Assistance Programs, particularly the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children.

I would also like to introduce and ask to come forward, Helen Hershkoff. Ms. Hershkoff is a staff attorney at the civil appeals unit of the Legal Aid Society of New York.

For several years, Ms. Hershkoff has been representing low-income clients who have difficulty acquiring benefits from local and Federal income support programs. In addition to her casework and class action suits, Ms. Hershkoff is an instructor at the law school of the City University of New York, and at Columbia University's School of Social Work.

I want to thank all of you for appearing before our committee. We apologize for the fact that you have to begin your testimony later than expected. As you have seen, we had compelling testimony and many important questions had to be asked. Let me assure you that your testimony is essential to the work of this committee, and we would like to hear it in full.

If you can, please summarize your testimony. The record will be open to accept your full testimony.

Let me ask Ms. Barwinski to proceed first, since you were supposed to testify earlier.

STATEMENT OF SARA L. BARWINSKI, A.C.S.W., ADVOCACY FACILITATOR, LUTHERAN FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF MISSOURI

Ms. BARWINSKI. Good morning. My name is Sara Barwinski. I'm a social worker on staff with Lutheran Family and Children's Services in St. Louis. I'm also representing the MASW Hunger Task Force and the National Anti-Hunger Coalition on which I serve as a board member.

In all three of these roles, I've had the opportunity to observe and assist homeless families, such as Nancy Jones, in some of the difficulties they have in receiving food assistance.

We first became aware of the problem in Missouri back in late 1983 when more of our caseload were homeless people and we were amazed to find that they were not able to receive food stamps.

We view ourselves in the charitable sector as partners with Government and so we attempt to access all programs possible for our clients. And the most needy, the most vulnerable are homeless clients who are not able to get food stamps in Missouri.

When we checked that out with the Department of Social Services at the State level, they assured us that no one was being denied food stamps on the basis of not having an address.

But this didn't square with the reality of what we knew was happening to our people. So in checking it out, we realized that homeless people were denied at the door. When they came to the welfare office, they had to supply a name and an address. And if they could not supply that, they weren't even allowed to make an application.

So there was no record in the State office. There was no denial issued. There was no right to appeal because they did not even get to apply.

We did initiate a test case and pushed the limits and were able to have a homeless person receive food stamps in the spring of

1984. We worked with the State to issue a policy memorandum making it very clear that people had the right to apply and they could pick up the food stamps at the county office to get around the problems of not having an address.

But as late as last week, I had a homeless client come in and tell me that they were told at the door, "Come back when you have an address." So we still haven't resolved all those problems.

And I wouldn't be surprised if this happens other places as well. It's a very efficient way of discriminating against a person without leaving a paper trail. They're not even in the system in the first place.

Once homeless people apply, there's a lot of problems that I went into in my written testimony which you also document very well in your summary report. And if you have any questions about those, I can respond to them later.

They're problems surrounding the problems of verification, expedited service—which is virtually nonexistent in Missouri—interim contacts with homeless people, and the whole issue around the institution definition that Nancy faced.

You're not really receiving adequate meals. But, on that basis, you're denied eligibility. And issues about quality control that do adversely affect people.

In spite of the advocacy that we've done around this issue, last month there were only 177 cases opened for homeless people receiving food stamps in the State of Missouri and that represents 240 persons.

In the city of St. Louis, there were 74 cases representing 93 persons. We have over 600 people in shelters in St. Louis and estimated over 1,000 persons at any one time that are homeless in the city. So we're talking about serving less than 10 percent of that population with food stamps.

So clearly, we have a long way to go. And I do disagree with the previous witness about the need for food stamp outreach for the homeless. It needs to be more than a publicity campaign. Certainly, it needs to be comprehensive where staff are trained in issues that are unique to homeless applications, and that an ombudsperson could be available to help people negotiate a system that often is very, very intimidating for them.

So I would like to encourage food stamp outreach for the homeless.

Another area that was hit on was the problem of the hidden homeless, those people like Nancy when she lived with her mother, that double and triple up with family members. And that we deny food stamps on the basis of that.

These are families that are already undergoing hardship and we punish them further.

We also are contributing to the possibility of abuse as well as hunger. We have families who are, you know, literally tripled and quadrupled up in close quarters and we're denying them a resource that could help get them stabilized.

I feel very strongly about this. I want to share some statistics from our AFDC food stamp caseload that really underscore the enormity of the problem.

In Missouri, the maximum grant for a family of three is $279. That's 36 percent of the poverty line. These families with children are well below income and resource levels for food stamps.

These are the poorest of our kids. But over 18,300 of these cases in Missouri alone—that's over 55,000 people, most of them children—did not receive food stamps. Twenty-nine percent of the AFDC caseload was made ineligibile for food stamps.

And when we asked the State why, they had to point to the household definition. And I concur that this is the reason they're not getting it. I think it's a mammouth problem and I would direct your attention to try and resolve this.

I don't know how you can interpret that other than discrimination against families. These families are helping one another. That was mentioned in previous testimony. Families do help out. They're allowing that person to live under their roof with them.

We don't make any adjustments in the Food Stamp Program for assets. If you're one person, you can have the same amount of assets as if you're 10 people. A lot of these people are being deprived, and it's really ultimately children that suffer.

Fifty-four percent of our homeless in St. Louis are families—women with children. And 60 percent of those were living in those kind of doubling, tripling up situations prior to their becoming homeless.

The last thing I wanted to share that I haven't heard mentioned but is a substantial barrier to participation for homeless families with children, is one of our top priorities is the hunger task force. If a homeless family has no place to stay, and that's very, very often the case; you know, since the shelters for families maintain long waiting lists.

They're afraid to go and apply for public assistance because that's identifying themselves to the State as a family that does not have a roof over their head. And the potential for them losing their child to protective services is great.

The shelter in St. Louis, that provides the most services to homeless families, counsels those who they turn away not to go apply for public assistance for this reason. It's so ridiculous. You identify yourself and if those children are taken away we're going to pay more money in foster care than we would in stabilizing that family.

In Missouri, at least, we don't have an emergency assistance program. And sometimes caseworkers feel like they have no other choice.

So finally, I would really like to stress that we need to assure programs are in place that homeless people do not put themselves in jeopardy as a family when requesting services that could help them.

I wanted to add a footnote about Nancy. She identified herself as a client for our day shelter services just last week. So this has moved very quickly for her. This time last week, she was not aware that this hearing even existed. And she's an excellent candidate for transitional housing and is at the top of our list.

So we do hope that we will have an apartment for her for the transitional period while she is saving enough money to get out on her own.

Again, just in summary, one comprehensive food stamp outreach program I feel is very, very helpful and appropriate; two, changing the household definition, and finally services to ensure family stability during the time of homelessness.

And I'd be happy to answer any questions later about any of the other issues that I had identified.

Thank you very much.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR SARA BARWINSKI

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MICKEY LELAND

Question. Based on your work with homeless persons, what specific barriers to participation are frequently experienced by homeless persons who begin the food stamp application process? Do you find these to be consistent with the findings of the select committee report?

Follow up: How do you recommend that Congress remove these barriers with legislative and/or administrative changes?

Answer. (A) the demand for extensive, unavailable verification; (B) Difficulties in maintaining client-worker contact leads to case closing; and (C) The household definition discriminates against families and leads to homelessness.

I agree with the findings of the select committee report, however our experience in Missouri indicates an ever lower food stamp participation rate for the homeless.

Changes that would help:

(1) Relaxing of overly stringent verification requirements. States become so concerned about the error rate they sometimes impose more restrictive requirements than necessary;

(2) Funds for food stamps outreach to include specialized workers available to insure access for homeless persons with problems determining eligibility or questions regarding ongoing case; and

(3) A change in household definition that defines households as economic units. Peope that fix and prepare meals together—related or not—are not necessarily financially responsible for one another. Witness Bode was concerned about increased fraud with a return to the pre-1981 language. But the real problem is language that makes it unlawful for people to break bread together.

Question. As a result of legislation enacted last year, the Secretaries of USDA and HHS are required to implement a procedure for a combined food stamp and SSI application for institutionalized persons prior to their discharge. What information do you have to indicate that this provision is being implemented?

Answer. There is no indication that this is happening. It has been raised with the State and they were working on regulations. They indicated that because USDA takes so long for descriptive rules it slows up the implementaiton process.

Question. A provision permitting homeless persons to utilize food stamps for hot meals, part of the Homeless Persons Survival Act which I introduced last year, has been enacted. I would appreciate your recommendations regarding the implemention of this legislation as it may affect the private voluntary sector's efforts to feed and shelter the homeless and its potential effect on the food stamp participation of the homeless.

Answer. The most positive aspect of the provision is that as a by-product it eliminated the 50 percent rule for shelters as institutions. This has greatly improved access to food stamps. Most private providers however, have no intention of becoming certified and would resist cutting into the clients resources by charing for emergency meals. It is important that the provision remains voluntary. Some have expressed the opinion that there is no such thing as a voluntary requirement as often pressure is created to contribute. A troublesome feature of proposed regulations is the fact that change cannot be provided. This could effectively eliminate contributions when denominations of fodd stamps are large.

Question. You mentioned that you worked with the Missouri State food stamp agency to design a policy directive for improving the application process and food stamp issuance for the homeless. To what extent has USDA provided you or the State agency with assistance in implementing these changes?

Answer. To my knowledge USDA has provided no imput. The presure for the changes came from the private, voluntary sector.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barwinski appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 109.]

Chairman LELAND. Thank you very much. And let me thank you too for the food stamp policy documents you provided to the committee during the preparation of our report on hunger among the homeless.

Dr. Benker?

STATEMENT OF KAREN E. BENKER, M.D., FORMER DIRECTOR, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

Dr. BENKER. Thank you very much. I appreciate the constraints on the committee's time and I'll let my written testimony provide more details.

Chairman LELAND. Let me also advise the panelists that the lack of availability now of our other colleagues does not mean, by any means, that they lack interest. Your testimony in the hearing record is most important.

The hearing record will be reviewed by all of our members and their staff. It is most important that you proceed with all due interest.

Dr. BENKER. We appreciate very much the leadership that the committee has taken on these issues.

Basically, to summarize what I have to say, wherever we find homeless families, we find hungry families. And where we find homeless hungry families, we find that their health is being damaged. And that, in a nutshell, is what all the nutritional studies of homeless families show.

In welfare hotels, which have been referred to by the previous witness and by Congressman Gilman, we set up teams of trained public health nurses with training in home economics and nutrition, gave them the maximum entitlement and asked them to go in the neighborhoods around the welfare hotels and, in a role-playing situation, come up with model budgets.

We intended to do that as a way of developing budgets that we could then use to teach the families who lived in the welfare hotels. It's possible that this may be like Rubix Cube: if you work at it long enough, you'll figure out a way to make it work.

But we were unable, after really repeated efforts, to find any way to take the entitlement and come up with a budget on which a family could actually eat a nutritious diet, principally because people do not have ways of cooking, they do not have ways of refrigerating food.

So the level of entitlement, even if it's complete, is inadequate.

Second, as many of us know here today, people do not get their entitlements on a regular basis. In the nutritional survey we did in one big welfare hotel one-third of the people weren't getting their food stamps regularly, for example.

It's a very difficult situation to stay on welfare if you're homeless. In the survey that we did on the welfare hotel, which will be submitted in the written testimony, we found that people reported in the previous 6 weeks 52 percent of the families living in the hotels said that for 1 day or more, they had been completely without food.

Fifty-two percent of all the families reported that. And that they had to get by by drinking water or borrowing foods from equally desperate people. And yet the people who are in the welfare hotels are in a comparatively—I can't say better—but less bad situation.

The families that are in the lower stage of temporary housing in the congregate shelters really have a much more difficult situation largely because a congregate shelter cannot be made sanitary. There are real problems with outbreaks of diarrhea wherever you have large numbers of nontoilet trained children running around.

The fact that both the children and the adults develop chronic diarrhea means that their nutritional status declines.

But the group that has the most severe problems is the group that Dr. Anna DeHavenon has been looking at with some help from me recently. Those are the many people who cannot get into the shelter system at all. And that's the majority of homeless people.

The shelter system is this big. And the number of people who are trying to get in is this big.

In interviewing families who come to apply for emergency housing, virtually every husband in the households reported to us that they had lost substantial amounts of weight while they were trying to apply. And as a physician, there was no doubt in my mind that this was true.

Men were holding up their pants with belts that had been taken in three or four notches. But even more alarmingly, the women in these families who are applying for assistance and for emergency housing and who were pregnant commonly reported that they had gained no weight during pregnancy even though they might be in their 6th or their 7th month.

These are shocking statistics that have very alarming implications for the future both of the woman and the unborn child. I would like to remind all of us here today that Congress, in its wisdom, set up the WIC Program to deal with this group of pregnant women and very young children because of their very special nutritional needs.

Those are needs that are addressed fairly well in the WIC Program. Again, we have a situation where the size of the WIC Program is this big and the number of people who need it is much greater. So that the WIC Program, itself, needs to be massively expanded.

But the WIC Program was set up before the phenomenon of homelessness became so apparent. And as a result, it's based on families being able to cook, families being able to refrigerate food. It's very difficult to use 18 eggs and 9 quarts of fresh milk if you're going to be sleeping in the park that night or if you also have to carry all your winter clothes around in a garbage bag.

So New York City has made some attempts to adapt a special WIC Program for families living in a welfare hotel. And hopefully that will have some effect. But basically, the nutritional needs of these families cannot be met unless they're in some type of permanent housing.

And I think Ms. Jones showed us very clearly that homeless people are homeless; they're not helpless. That we don't need to institutionalize all kinds of services around what are very demeaning

temporary shelters. That basically, people need affordable housing and they need jobs.

Thank you.

Chairman LELAND. Thank you, Doctor.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR KAREN E. BENKER, M.D.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MICKEY LELAND

Question. In your testimony you briefly mention a WIC demonstration program for homeless families. Could you please elaborate on this program and how we might apply the New York City demonstration project on a national scale?

Answer. The instability and other special difficulties of life for homeless families make it hard for them to enroll and participate in WIC. The program in New York City tries to remove some barriers. First, the WIC Program is on-site at a welfare hotel and does aggressive outreach to enroll and educate families. Then, the food package is specially tailored to the conditions of life of each family. For example, foods that don't require refrigeration, like peanut butter, is substituted for others, like eggs. Checks are more frequent and for smaller amounts to ease storage problems. The nutritionists devote more individual time to families and have developed a special teaching program for them.

Nationally the WIC Program could do a great deal for homeless families by expanding the number of slots and by granting automatic eligibility to homeless families; by seeking out and enrolling these families in special need; and by encouraging needed package changes, for example, infant formula in single-serving portions so that families without refrigeration wouldn't have to throw away spoiled milk daily.

Question. As a health practitioner you are aware of the impact social factors have on nutrition and health. Many researchers discussing homeless families blame the families for the problems they encounter. From your investigations, how appropriate is this assumption?

Answer. The basic problem that these families encounter is that there is no housing they can afford. As a group, they're quite similar to millions of other families. For example, in New York City, homeless women are demographically close to women who live in low-income housing projects; yet they're nearly one-and-a-half times as likely to have low-birth-weight babies. The data available show that the difference isn't accounted for by the things that homeless women are sometimes accused of, like drug abuse. It's important to remember, too, that most homeless people are children, who can hardly be held responsible for their own plight.

At the same time, we do know that human health is damaged by the circumstances that homelesss families face: exposure to cold, inadequate and irregular meals, lack of proper rest, inability to bathe and to launder clothes regularly, and lack of medical care. These are circumstances that the most energetic and well-motivated homeless mother in the world would not be able to overcome on her own. I've been impressed over and over again at how well families manage against enormous odds.

Question. We unfortunately realize that the need for emergency and transitional shelter will not disappear overnight. How can the Federal Government ensure that families who must await permanent housing are not forced to live in squalid living conditions such as those you have described?

Answer. There are some excellent models for transitional shelters, models that the Federal Government can encourage through conditions on funding. For example, in Philadelphia, the Committee for Fairness and Dignity, an organization of homeless individuals, staffs and operates their own shelter, with special programs for job-training and skills-enhancement. Requiring that Federal money for emergency housing also provide jobs, job-training, and full involvement for homeless people would go a long way to reducing the callous, inhumane nature of many current shelters.

Another excellent model is the Amboy Street Shelter in Brooklyn. Blocks of abandoned apartment houses have been rehabilitated into temporary furnished apartments. With changes in Federal regulations, this rehabilitated housing could be returned to the stock of permanent housing as new temporary apartments are created. Of course, construction jobs and job-training for homeless people would make such a rehabilitation program especially worthwhile.

From the point of view of healthful living conditions for families, private kitchen, and toilet facilities are essential. It makes no sense to spend enormous amounts of tax-money—as is now planned in New York City, for example—to turn abandoned

office buildings and schools, rather than abandoned apartment houses, into temporary family shelters. It's just too expensive to put in the plumbing necessary to meet sanitary standards; and the buildings aren't really habitable without those plumbing changes. How are we ever going to explain to our children that we let millions of people live in the streets while the Government held a vast supply of abandoned housing off the market, housing that could be easily rehabilitated by the labor of the very people now living in the streets?

[The prepared statement of Dr. Benker appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 114.]

Chairman LELAND. Ms. Hershkoff.

STATEMENT OF HELEN HERSHKOFF, ATTORNEY, THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Ms. HERSHKOFF. Thank you. My name is Helen Hershkoff. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to testify here today.

I am an attorney with the Legal Aid Society of New York. As an attorney, I represent poor people: poor women whose lives are very similar to the life led by Nancy Jones who described her life to you today.

I also represent clients who live in welfare hotels that Dr. Benker described to you today. For my clients, the Food Stamp Program could provide a lifeline to a decent diet. It may not be able to provide them with housing, but it can certainly provide them with food.

What we are finding in New York, however, is that there is a staggering increase in the number of poor people and homeless people who experience daily food emergencies. That means not having enough food, not having money, and not having food stamps with which to buy food.

We, in New York, have 5,000 homeless families who daily sleep in shelters. We have 10,000 homeless individuals who sleep in shelters. Countless others, thousands, sleep on park benches, in train terminals, on subways.

More and more of these poor and homeless people go to soup kitchens and go to food pantries to get food. More and more of these people find themselves barred from the Food Stamp Program.

And the question I put to you today is, Why? And what I believe, as a lawyer, and what I believe as someone who works in the community and works with poor people, is that the Food Stamp Act itself creates barriers, insurmountable barriers, which block homeless people and poor people from participating in the program.

The first barrier that we have is information, plain and simple. I have heard it said today that all poor people are aware of the Food Stamp Program. But do they know where to apply for food stamps? Do they know how to apply for food stamps?

Can they call to find out if they haven't got a quarter? Can a homeless man go down to the welfare center if he hasn't got a dollar to get a token to get on the subway?

What we need, and what we need now, is Federal money for outreach. The solution is to abolish immediately the prohibition, the ban of Federal money for outreach. Educate the people about food stamps. Publicize their right to food stamps.

Have poster campaigns to tell people where to apply for food stamps. And work with community groups, fund community

groups, help them to reinforce community ties. Don't let homelessness further disintegrate our neighborhoods and our communities. Use the Food Stamp Program and use outreach money to reinforce our communities.

Second, we have the barrier of verification. Let me tell you the story of Frances M., one of my clients. Frances M. is a 54-year-old woman. She lives with another person in a very small apartment in New York City. She needed food stamps. She was hungry.

She applied for food stamps. She gave the agency her clinic card, she gave the agency her library card, she gave the agency a letter from the prime tenant to prove where she lived, but that wasn't enough. The agency also wanted a copy of France M's birth certificate.

But somewhere in the long years since 1930, Frances M had lost her birth certificate. She no longer had it. However, she went down to the department of health and she asked for a copy of the birth certificate. All this time she was very hungry, but no one gave her expedited food stamps, no one gave her any help, no one made any phone calls on her behalf, no one wrote any letters on her behalf.

The department of health never sent the birth certificate, and Frances M's food stamp application was denied.

Frances M is not an isolated instance. Thousands of poor people, thousands of homeless people, cannot get food stamps because they cannot verify their need for food stamps.

A homeless family does not have a file cabinet filled with documents that prove to you that they are hungry. A disabled person who lives on the street simply cannot go from agency to agency to get the right piece of paper to prove his need.

What can we do? We urge you to simplify the application process for food stamps. We urge you to eliminate all the unnecessary face-to-face interviews. We urge you to require the States and to fund the States to assist the people in making applications for food stamps.

We urge you to monitor the States to make sure that they have trained workers to assist people to make out food stamp applications. We urge you to enforce the requirement that States make collateral contacts when a homeless person cannot provide the right piece of paper to prove need.

And we urge you to sanction the States when they do not issue food stamps to eligible people, when they do not issue food stamps to an eligible homeless woman who does not have the right piece of paper in her shopping bag, sanction the States and sanction the States again when they do not restore benefits to people who have been wrongfully denied or to people who have not received the appropriate amount of food stamps.

Third, we have the barrier of the Food Stamp Act's household rule that prevents parents and children or siblings who live together, but do not share food expenses, from claiming separate household status.

I have heard it said today that the household rule was enacted in order to eliminate fraud. But I submit to you that the rule was enacted without any empirical evidence whatsoever to show that blood relatives who live together are anymore prone to manipulate

or fraudulently use the Food Stamp Program than nonblood people who live together.

Many of these children who are required to form a single household with their parents are, in fact, grown-up. They are grown-up with children and they have to double up with relatives because there is no place to live.

We have 230,000 doubled-up families in New York. Thirty-five thousand families living in New York City in public housing alone are doubled-up. Consider one of my clients. Consider Delores B.

Delores B. is a mother of three and she lived in the Bronx. And she lost her apartment. And the waiting list for public housing is 175,000 in New York City. So Delores B. moved in with her mother.

And her mother worked. Her mother had a job, not enough money to feed Delores or to feed her grandchildren, but enough to get by. But the household rule required that Delores include her mother on her own food stamp budget.

And it seemed that on paper, at least, Delores had some money. Her food stamps stopped. Her children's food stamps stopped. The children were hungry. Relations in the household became strained.

Delores moved out of the apartment. Delores moved into a welfare hotel in Queens. The room was very small and the hotel was very sordid. The children could not go to school in the Bronx any longer. Their lives were disrupted. Their lives were rootless.

And at last count, Delores B. was putting her children into foster care.

What can we do? I urge you immediately to abolish the household rule. Let relatives who have to live with other relatives but do not share food expenses claim separate household status the same way all other people who live together can claim separate household status if they don't share food expenses.

And if a relative isn't under a legal obligation to support the other relatives with whom he lives, don't assume that his money is available to feed the other people whom he happens to give a bed and a roof.

The alternative is for those relatives to sleep on the street or in a welfare hotel that will cost New York City $100 a night.

Finally, we have the barrier of the so-called excess shelter deduction that forces poor families to choose between rent and food.

The Food Stamp Act assumes that you have 30 percent of your countable income to buy food. But in New York City, practically speaking, we have no low-income housing. There simply isn't any.

Fifty percent of our public assistance caseload pay lease rent that is higher than the allowance they get for rent. They can pay the rent and avoid eviction and avoid homelessness only if they take money that is supposed to be for food and pay it to the landlord.

If you're paying the money to the landlord, you can't buy food at the grocery store. But the Food Stamp Act does not permit these households a dollar for dollar deduction for these so-called excess shelter costs. What can we do?

I urge you immediately to uncap the excess shelter deduction. You do it for the elderly, you do it for the disabled when excess shelter costs are about 50 percent of accountable income.

Why not do it for someone like Damien whose mother you heard testify today? Why not do it for all the young children of New York City? There is more you can do, as well. I urge you to uncap the shelter deduction entirely. Please, recognize the reality that money paid to a landlord can not buy food.

And finally, I ask you to amend the Food Stamp Act to recognize the reality of food costs. A poor family does not have 30 percent countable income to buy food. And food costs more than 30 percent of a family's income to buy food.

Amend the act so that food stamps will be reduced only 15 cents and not 30 cents for every dollar of income. A generation of Americans saved from hunger will thank you.

And I thank you for your concern and for your interest in this terribly important issue. I would like to have included in the hearing record my formal statement, as well as written responses to certain questions asked on behalf of the select committee by Chairman Leland.

Thank you.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR HELEN HERSHKOFF

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MICKEY LELAND

Question. You briefly cite a study by the city of New York which documents the food stamp participation of persons utilizing soup kitchens and shelters. The findings of the study appear to corroborate those of the Select Committee report. From your experience representing homeless persons, what specific documentation requirements are the most frequently posed barriers for these applicants?

Follow up: What legislative and administrative changes do you recommend to ensure that eligible homeless persons are not denied food stamps and that they received them expeditiously?

Answer. Experience representing homeless persons confirms that specific documentation requirements frequently pose barriers to participation by applicants—especially homeless applicants—in the Food Stamp Program. These requirements include presentation of a social security card, a birth certificate, and naturalization papers. Although homeless men and women frequently have no cash and no income, they are neverethless expected to place long-distance telephone calls and to obtain certified copies of forms, both of which require prepayment of fees.

The following examples are illustrative of the ways in which rigid documentation requirements bar needy men and women from food assistance, and cause them to suffer prolonged periods of hunger:

Earl G. applied for food stamps on or about November 17, 1986. The agency refused to process Earl G.'s application because he could not produce a lease, even though Earl G. is homeless and has no lease. The agency also demanded a copy of Earl G.'s birth certificate and social security card—which he had lost—even though copies of these documents were already on file from Earl G.'s earlier application for assistance.

Lindberg R. applied for food stamp on or about December 10, 1986. At the time of application, he was homeless and lived in a private catholic shelter. Lindberg R. subsequently obtained housing and presented the agency with verification of his residence and rent. He informed the agency that he had lost his birth certificate and social security card, but presented verification that he had applied for a social security card. He also gave the agency his public assistance identification card, which was dated November 1986. The agency nevertheless insisted that Lindberg R. produce a birth certificate or draft registration card. Lindberg R. asked his grandmother in South Carolina to obtain a copy of his birth certificate, but she mistakenly obtained a copy of his brother's certificate. Unable to present a birth certificate, Lindberg R.'s application was denied.

Larry S., a homeless man, applied for food stamps on December 23, 1986. The agency demanded that within 2 weeks he submit verification that he had applied for unemployment insurance benefits, proof of identify, proof of residence, and a New York State Employment Services referral letter. Larry S. timely submitted a birth certificate, a social security card, a New York State Employment Services referral

letter, and an unemployment insurance benefits booklet with the name and telephone number of a person at the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Office with whom Larry S. had spoken when the applied for benefits. Because he is homeless, Larry S. could not verify his residence. Without making and collateral contacts, the agency denied Larry S.'s application.

Haileselassie A., a homeless man who sleeps in Central Park, applied for food stamps in September or October 1986. Haileselassie A. had lost all his identification papers, including his social security card and immigration papers. He told the agency that his need for assistance was immediate and that he would cooperate in efforts to locate documentation. The agency made no collateral contacts to verify identity or need, did not tell Haileselassie A. about expedited food stamps, and denied his application.

William B., who has been homeless for about 1 year, applied for food stamps. He was advised by the agency in December 1986 to submit proof of residence and a letter from a former employer for whom he had worked for 2 weeks. William B. asked the employer for a letter, but the employer refused. Without making any collateral contacts to verify William B.'s past employment, the agency denied his application.

David G., homeless since November 14, 1986, applied for food stamps. He was advised on December 29, 1986 to submit by January 2, 1987 written verification that he had registered with the New York State Employment Services. That same day, David G. registered, as required, and mailed his written proof to the agency. On January 8, 1987, the agency denied David G.'s application on the ground that he had failed to keep an appointment with the New York State Employment Services and had failed to submit verification that he had registered.

Marie W., a homeless battered woman with one child, applied for food stamps in March 1986. Marie W. had earlier suffered a nervous breakdown and had lost all of her documentation while hospitalized. The agency insisted that she verify her citizenship. Many months earlier, Marie W. had in fact requested that Immigration and Naturalization Services mail her a copy of her naturalization papers, but the papers had not yet arrived. The agency would not give Marie W. food stamps without a certified copy of these papers, and relented only after counsel intervened on Marie W.'s behalf.

Charles P. applied for food stamps on September 26, 1986, having recently arrived in New York State from California and Illinois where he had spent the past year homeless and transient. The agency requested that by October 10, 1986, Charles P. produce verification that he had registered with the New York State Employment Services and of his maintenance over the previous year. Charles P. produced proof that he had registered, and also wrote a statement setting forth the various cities in which he had lived and the names and addresses of the shelters, pastors, churches, and hotels from which he had obtained food and emergency shelter. The agency denied Charles P.'s application for inadequate verification of past maintenance.

Gregory I. applied for food stamps on or about November 20, 1986. Gregory I. informed the agency that he was born in Newark, N.J. and that he was a U.S. citizen. Gregory I. had previously received assistance in January 1986. Although the agency did not doubt Gregory I.'s citizenship, it nevertheless demanded a copy of his birth certificate. On December 9, 1986, a card was sent to New Jersey to request a copy of the birth certificate. Three days later, the agency denied Gregory I.'s application because the certificate had not yet arrived. The agency never tried to locate Gregory I.'s previous case file, which probably contained proof of citizenship.

These stories are not isolated examples. Documentation requirements routinely cause eligible New Yorkers to lose food stamps to which they are entitled, condemning individuals and families with children to food emergencies. In May 1986, the East Harlem Interfaith Welfare Committee released a report that surveyed 1,576 households with children who had sought emergency food assistance from 10 religious agencies in 1985. (See "The Tyranny of Indifference and the Re-Institutionalization of Hunger: Homelessness and Poor Health: A Study of the Causes and Conditions of the Food Emergencies in 1,576 Households with Children in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx," May 21, 1986). Twenty-six percent of those households on public assistance were in food emergencies because their public assistance and/or food stamp cases had been closed for administrative reasons or in error. *Id.*, at 7. Of the 112 households that had gone to their Income Maintenance Centers to apply for assistance, 17 were told to submit additional documentation, including written proof that their cases had been closed. *Id.*, at 36.

To ensure that eligibile homeless persons receive food stamps to which they are entitled and that they receive benefits expeditiously, specific legislative and administrative action should be taken:

First, an otherwise eligible applicant's inability to produce a social security card should never bar him or her from the food stamp program. The Secretary of Agriculture should take administrative steps to establish interagency cooperation with the Social Security Administration to ensure access to an applicant's social security number or his or her application for such number. In certain contexts, the Food Stamp Program already relies on the "Bendex" computer system to verify eligibility. 7 C.F.R. § 273.2. Alternatively, Congress could require the Social Security Administration to cooperate with State agencies seeking verification of social security numbers for food stamp purposes, and, further, could require the Social Security Administration to develop the computer capability needed to respond to requests for verification within a 1-day period.

Second, an otherwise eligible applicant's inability to produce a birth certificate should never bar him or her from the Food Stamp Program. Congress should require the States to establish special units within local departments of health which would be required to respond to requests for birth certificates within a specified period. In any event, State agencies should be required to accept telephone verification of identity, and not to delay issuance of benefits to await arrival of a written document.

Third, no homeless man, woman, or child should be denied food stamps because he or she does not have money to make telephone calls or to write to obtain documentation from past employers or agencies. The Department of Agriculture must monitor State agencies to ensure that collateral contacts are made, and must sanction the States when collateral contacts are not made. Moreover, an applicant who attests to homelessness must not be denied benefits for failure to provide proof of residence. In addition, no homeless man, woman, or child should be denied food stamps because he or she does not have subway fare to pick up an application. Food stamp applications should be made available on-site at shelters, food pantries, and soup kitchens.

Finally, the Department of Agriculture must monitor the States to ensure that they comply with application procedures, especially regulations governing expedited issuances. Homeless persons frequently have no cash and are in desperate need. Yet expedited issuances remain a rare occurrence and agencies frequently fail to tell destitute persons in immediate need that they may be entitled to expedited food stamps. Federal outreach money must be made available to inform the homeless about the availability of expedited issuances.

Question. Could you please expand on your comments about the quality control system and its effect on food stamp participation by eligible applicants?

Answer. Quality control has had an adverse effect on food stamp participation by eligible applicants. No one disputes the need for efficiency and economy in the administration of our Nation's income maintenance programs. But these twin goals cannot be used to thwart the ultimate remedial purpose of the Food Stamp Program: "to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's population by raising levels of nutrition among low-income households," 7 U.S.C. § 2011.

The quality control system purports to provide a mechanism for assessing State agency compliance with the Food Stamp Program's national uniform standards of eligibility. As currently designed, quality control targets a State agency's excessive errors involving Federal funds, and calculates sanctions based on the amount of a State's federally reimbursed administrative costs for a specific period.

Use of the term "error," however, is administrative fiction: sanctions flow only when a State agency provides food stamps to ineligible households and excess benefits to eligible households. No sanction attaches to underissuances, terminations, denials, and delays. Far from operating as a neutral management took the quality control system instead creates clear incentives for the establishment of onerous verification requirements, such as the ones described in response to question 1.

The Department of Agriculture may argue that the rate of underissuances has not seriously increased in the last 5 years. This contention must be seriously questioned.

First, it is important to note that the rate of purported-over issuances and payments to ineligibles disguises the true rate of underissuance. For example, error rates do not tell us how many eligible households have been denied benefits for procedural reasons—the inability to produce a birth certificate. The present quality control system creates a bias toward these "procedural denials"—a withholding of food stamps from eligible, needy applicants—causing thousands of poor persons who cannot produce a social security card or birth certificate to suffer food emergencies.

Second, the so-called error rate counts as overpayments mere enumeration errors—for example, a worker's failure to record in a case file the social security card of an otherwise eligible recipient who actually had a social security card but

did not produce it on time. The definition of error no where considers whether the household is in fact financially eligible for food stamps.

Finally, statistics obtained from the New York State Department of Social Services suggest that the rate and amount of underissuances in New York is increasing, nor decreasing:

Cases in error—Underissued

[In percent]

September 1983 to August 1984	8.7
October 1984 to September 1985	9.5
October 1985 to September 1986	11.4

Amounts in error—Underissuances

[In percent]

September 1983 to August 1984	3.04
October 1984 to September 1985	3.64
October 1985 to September 1985	3.7

Under these circumstances, it is imperative that the Select Committee take a hard look at the Food Stamp Program's quality control system and take steps to ensure that "procedural denials" and "enumeration errors" not cause the needy to go hungry.

Question. Testimony today and findings in the Select Committee report highlight the difficulty that "hidden homeless" families face in feeding themselves and their children as a result of the household definition. Do you have any information on the extent of this problem in New York City and the nation?

Answer. The hidden homeless—families that live doubled-up with parents or siblings—face difficulty in feeding themselves and their children as a result of the Food Stamp Act's "household rule," 7 U.S.C. §2011(i).

Estimates of the number of "doubled-up" families in New York City and the Nation vary. Newspapers report the number of doubled-up families to exceed 230,000 in New York City alone. The Sunday New York Times (Jan. 12, 1986), sect. 8, at 1. A more conservative estimate was published by the Community Service Society, a nonprofit organization, which fixed the number as of January 1986 at 103,000 households. (*See* "Stemming the Tide of Displacement: Housing Policies for Preventing Homelessness," at 4, citing V. Bach, "Housing Working Paper, Focus and Direction" Report, at 5).

According to the Report of the Mayor's Advisory Task Force on the Homeless:

Surveys of residents indicate that many (50–60 percent of families; 30–50 percent of singles) come to the shelters from a doubled-up or other living situation that became intolerable for reasons other than building conditions. (*Id.*, at 45).

The Mayor's Advisory Task Force on the Homeless recently called on the city to encourage doubled-up arrangements through payment of financial incentives. (*Id.*, at 49).

While the data do not specify the number of families doubled-up in the apartments of a parent or sibling, we do know that city and state policy, as set forth in regulations requires families that face homelessness to explore opportunities of doubling-up with relatives before emergency shelter will be provided.

According to the New York City Human Resources Administration, homeless families seeking emergency shelter during a 1-week period in December 1985 deiplayed the following characteristics:

59.2 percent of the homeless families could "tap relatives or friends occasionally for a place to sleep."

26 percent answered "yes" that "if it came to it," they could stay for a particular night with "family or friends" rather than in "city-provided accomodations."

44 percent did not have their own appartment" at any time during the past 2 years."

33.8 percent reported living with relatives before seeking emergency shelter.

35 percent had been evicted by either a friend or relative, and 17 percent reported "problems associated with being doubled up, including overcrowded conditions, a housing arrangement known to be temporary, or the primary tenant moving." (New York City Human Resources Administration, Office of Program Evaluation, Characteristics and Housing Histories of Families Seeking Shelter from HRA (October 1986), at p. iii-iv; table 6; table 8; table 9).

We do not know, however, whether the apartment of a parent of sibling is a place of first or last resort. Some data on this subject maybe gleaned from the East Harlem Interfaith Welfare Committee's survey of 1,576 familes with children who

sought emergency food assistance from 10 religious voluntary agencies in 1985. Of the surveyed households, 31.9 percent comprised two or more adult households. Excluding the 248 households with one female and one male of parental generation, at least 16 percent of these surveyed houdeholds included parent-child relations. "The Tyranny of Indifference and the Re-Institutionalization of Hunger, Homelessness and Poor Health: A Study of the Causes and Conditions of the Food Emergencies in 1,576 Households with Children in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx in 1985" (May 21, 1986), at pp. 16-18, table 5).

Under the "household rule," however, each of these doubled-up parents and children would be considered a single household for purposes of determining food stamp eligibility and benefit levels, even if they do not share food expenses or have any legal responsibility of support. Consider the case of Delores B., a mother of three, who became homeless and had to double-up with her mother. Delores B.'s mother worked and so had earned income. The "household rule" caused and outright termination of Delores B.'s food stamps—food stamps stopped even though Delores B. Received no food money from her mother. Far from promoting the purported goal of familial integrity and suport, the "household rule" caused severe financial strain and eventually caused the total disruption of Delores B.'s family and the placement of her children into foster care. Even when the consequences are less severe, other households experience drops in their food stamp levels. Where a woman with two children—whose only source of income is public assistance—doubles up with a sister and her two children—and their only source of income is also public assistance—the combined households will lose at least $40 of food stamps, with no effective increase in income or food purchasing power.

We therefore welcome action by the Select Committee to cure the unintended harsh effects of the "household rule" to ensure that families on the brink of homelessness do not go hungry.

Question. It is assumed in the determination of food stamp benefits that recipients have availalble one-third of their income for food. You state that this assumption is incorrect. Please provide us with data on actual food and housing costs of low-inomce households in New York City which support your statement.

Answer. The Food Stamp Act assumes in the determination of food stamp benefits that recipients have available one-third of their income for food. In fact, the poor, although spending fewer dollars on food than the averaage American, actually use a higher percentage of household income for food than the average American family. Moreover, data on actual food and housing costs of low-income households in New York City demonstrate (a) that recipients do not have available one-third of their income for food, and also (b) that the purchase of a nutritious diet requires low-income households in New York City to spend more than one-third of their income on food. According to the Report of the Manhattan Borough President's Task Force on Housing for Homeless Families: [P]ublic assistance families are often forced to choose between paying their rent and feeding their children as high rents force them to dip into their basic needs grant to close the gap. (A Shelter Is Not a Home (March 1987), at 44).

(a) Background: The Relation between Income and Food Consumption

Entitlement to food stamps and the level of benefits received are based on the Federal poverty index and the index's underlying assumptions about the relationship between income and food consumption.

The amount of food stamps available to an eligible household is determined by reference to the cost of the government-prepared Thrifty Food Plan, the least costly of four food plans developed by the Department of Agriculture. The Thrifty Food Plan, like the poverty index, assumes that 30 percent of net food stamp income will be available for food purchases. The amount of food stamps allotted to the household is the difference between the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan for the number of persons in the household and the presumed available income to purchase that food, *i.e.* 30 percent of net food stamp income, subject, however, to the restriction that as of October 1, 1986, food stamps allotted to an eligible household will not exceed the equivalent of $81.00 per person per month. For a family of four, food stamps allotted to the household cannot exceed the equivalent of $271 per month.

The Thrifty Food Plan, first published in 1975, was intended to reflect food consumption practices of selected low-income households included in the 1965 USDA Household Food Consumption Survey. In 1983, USDA revised the Thrifty Food Plan, based on the food consumption patterns (updated to 1981 food costs) of a 1977–78 sample of 4,400 households deemed eligible for food stamp benefits. (Thrifty Food Plan, 1983, Human Nutrition Information Services, p. 4.) The actual food purchases

by the food stamp households surveyed, when adjusted to meet nutritional goals at 1981 prices, cost approximately 24 percent more than the corresponding cost of the 1975 Thrifty Food. Plan. (*Id.*, p. 9). In order to keep the cost of the 1983 Thrifty Food Plan no greater than that of the 1975 Thrifty Food Plan, the quantities of food groups in the Plan were further adjusted not only to improve nutritional efficiency but also to cut the cost of food as purchased by the 4,400 households in the low-income survey. Thus, the cost of the 1983 Thrifty Food Plan as issued was 20 percent less than the adjustment for nutritional economy deemed practical for food stamp households.

As a result of this reduction in the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan, and the continued assumption that 30 percent of income is available to be spent on food, low-income households across the Nation that are eligible for food stamps generally do not obtain adequate diets. 45 Fed. Reg. 21998, at 22001 (Apr. 2, 1980). Specifically, the Department of Agriculture has recognized that only 12 percent of the 4,400 low-income households surveyed had diets that provided the minimal recommended dietary allowances of nutrients and only 34 percent had daily diets providing up to 80 percent of these recommended allowances. Thrifty Food Plan, 1983, *supra*, at 16.

(b) Public Assistance In New York State

In thinking about the food consumption patterns of low-income New Yorkers, it is important to remember just how little money a public assistance household receives each month. The official Federal poverty line for a family of four is currently $10,989 of annual income, or $916 of income each month, (Consumer Income Series, "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1985," P-60, No. 154, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, August 1986). But in New York State, the basic public assistance grant for a family of four is approximately $326.70 per month, plus a grant for shelter, where heat is included in rent, of no more than $270. The maximum public assistant grant in New York is thus 65 percent of the Federal poverty level, down from 97 percent of the Federal poverty level in 1969. (Report of the Mayor's Advisory Task Force on the Homeless, Feb. 24, 1987, at p. 52).

(c) Food Costs in New York City

In 1981, the administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration acknowledged that a gap exists between the nonshelter component of the public assistance grant and the actual cost of subsistence living in New York City: "We have approximately 1.2 million recipients of food stamps in the city and 820,000 of those are public assistance recipients. Two-thirds are children. The basic AFDC grant, including rent, is $476 a month. The typical AFDC family of four would get $150 more in food stamps. All of this works out to $13 a day to pay for food, gas, electric, telephone, clothing, laundry, school supplies, all of the other expenses * * * other than medical expenses which people must pay out. A family has to live on $91 a week for all of these expenses * * *. Food alone in New York City costs about $104 a week. So you can see the extent to which we fail short."

See U.S. House of Representatives, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition of the Committee on Agriculture, 97th Cong., 1st Sess., at 306 (March 1981).

The situation since 1981 has gotten worse.

The Department of Agriculture currently estimates that a family of four following the Thrifty Food Plan will spend approximately $63 per week for food prepared and eaten at home. 51 Fed. Reg. 36043, 36044 (Oct. 8, 1986).[1]

Even if a poor New York family eats only the constituent food elements of the Thirfty Food Plan, its grocery bill will be more than the price level set by the Department of Agriculture.

In August 1985, the Community Food Resources Center, a nonprofit organization based in New York City, sought to determine whether the cost level of the Thrifty Food Plan conformed to actual grocery prices in New York City. Data collected by the Center demonstrate that the cost of food in New York City prevents poor families from obtaining adequate diets given the unrealistically low cost level of the Thrify Food Plan.

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[1] By contrast, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Market Basket Survey for the 2-month period January and February 1987 estimated weekly food costs for a family of four to be $121.35 and $120.81 for each month, respectively.

The Center priced the constituent food elements of the Thrifty Food Plan in terms of the cheapest available product, as specified by the Department's Human Nutrition Information Service, in six supermarkets in Brooklyn and Manhattan. (The Department published these constituent food elements in sample meal plans and weekly food lists, that emphasize cheap sources of nutrients, such as grains and beans.)

The following is a summary of the cost of purchasing the foods for 1 week for a family of four on the Thrifty Food Plan:

Supermarket	Location	Neighborhood	Cost
D'Agostino	Broadway and 75th Street Manhattan	Middle income	$88.50
Shopwell	9th Avenue and 43d St. Manhattan	Low income	98.01
Victoria	8th Avenue and 50th St. Manhattan	Low income	89.95
Key Food	Park Slope, Brooklyn	Middle income	76.36
Key Food	Coney Island, Brooklyn	Low income	79.19
Jet Food	Coney Island, Brooklyn	Low income	88.91

Only the cost of the actual amount needed for the menu was calculated. The list of food and quantities purchased in each store is annexed as exhibit A.

The average cost of these foods at the six supermarkets was $86.82—an amount that exceeds the Department's estimated cost of the Thrifty Food Plan by almost 40 percent.

Since August 1985, when the survey was conducted, food prices have risen. The Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Food at Home, Urban Consumers, New York and Northeastern New Jersey lists the price of food as 307.7 in August 1985 (with the average price of food in 1967 designated as 1000) and as 323.3 in September 1986, an increase or more than 5 percent.

Thus, food stamps are insufficient to ensure nutritionally adequate diets to New York's poor, even if they can allot 30 percent of the nonshelter component of their public assistance grant to food.

In fact, however, a significant shortfall exists between the nonshelter component of the public assistance grant and the actual cost of nonshelter needs in New York City. The shortall is exacerbated by the wide gap that also exists between the shelter component of the grant and actual rents in New York City. These two factors ensure that low-income households do not have available 30 percent of their income for food.

New York State originally set the amount of nonshelter public assistance equal to a reduced and modified version of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Lower Level Budget. In April 1986, the Community Council of Greater New York, Inc., a nonprofit organization that serves as a voluntary citywide central resources on research for governmental and voluntary social and health agencies, published research on the present adequacy of the nonshelter component of public assistance when compared with the modified budget level. The Council based its analysis on total nonshelter income for a faculty of three, including a basic cash grant of $253 and food stamps of $148. The Council determined that a lower-income household, even when its public assistance grant is supplmented by food stamps, routinely falls short $73 each month of the modified budget level. At the same time, however, significant numbers of low-income households are expected to divert a portion of their nonshelter grants to pay rent and avoid eviction.

(d) Housing Costs in New York City

Most low-income New York City households must use food money to pay rent, leaving them less than 30 percent of available income to buy food.

Statistics from the New York City Human Resources Administration show that the most public assistance families cannot find apartments within the cost level of the statutory shelter maximum. The table below sets forth the current shelter maximum schedule.

Number of persons in household

1	$193
2	227
3	244
4	270
5	281
6	308

In December 1986, 63.3 percent of all public assistance households in private housing had rents at or above the shelter maximum. (By contrast, in June 1986, 59.7 percent of all public assistance households in private housing had rents at or above the shelter maximum.) (New York City Human Resources Administration, Office of Policy and Economic Research, HRA Facts). It is currently estimated that of this figure, 9 percent pay rents at the shelter maximum, and about 54 percent pay rents above the statutory ceiling.

The table that follows breaks down, as of June 1985, AFDC and ADCU households (families with children) in New York City with lease rent in excess of the shelter allowance, and the amount by which the lease rent exceeded the statutory ceiling:

Public assistance households with lease rent above ceiling

Number of AFDC and ADCU households	81,165
Percent of P.A. households	46.0

Amount by which lease rent exceeds ceiling

Under $10	13.3
$10 to $19	9.9
$20 to $29	11.7

Amount by which lease rent exceeds ceiling

[In percent]

$40 to $59	17.2
$60 to $69	10.2
$80 to $119	13.4
$120 to $159	6.7
$160 to $199	2.8
$200 plus	3.4

(New York City Human Resources Administration, "Dependency: Economic and Social Data for New York City," Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan.-June 1985), at table 24, p. 53).

Thus, 265,000 households are required to spend 40 percent of income to pay rent, while an additional 200,000 households spend over 50 percent of income to pay rent. In other words, over 70 percent of public assistance tenants bear rent burdens of a least 40 percent of income, which severly limits their ability to buy food, clothing, or other essentials. (*See* "Stemming the Tide of Displacement: Housing Policies for Preventing Homelessness," at table 1, pp. 9–10.)

These data are consistent with surveys of families with children who sought emergency food assistance from 10 religious agencies in 1985: 31 percent of the 1,192 households already on or reapplying after having been cut off public assistance were paying food money for rent because their shelter allowance did not match actual rent. "The Tyranny of Indifference and the Re-Institutionalization of Hunger, Homelessness and Poor Health: A Study of the Causes and Conditions of the Food Emergencies in 1,576 Households with Children in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx in 1985" (May 21, 1986), at pp. 5, 26, table 13.

Nor may one assume that lower-income households consciously select to live in better-than-average apartments at unaffordable prices. At a time when 25,000 New Yorkers are homeless—including more than 11,000 children—most public assistance families simply cannot locate adequate apartments within the shelter grant maximum. The fact is that low-income housing no longer exists in New York City.

The available data show that rent increases in New York City have far exceeded statutory increases in the shelter grant. Since 1975, the shelter maximum for public assistance households increases once, in 1984, by about 25 percent. (For example, a family of four in 1975 was eligible to receive a maximum rent grant of $218; today the maximum is $270.) By contrast, between 1975 and 1984, median contract rent for apartments rose by 90 percent. (*See* L. Bloomber, "The Rental Housing Situation in New York City at 80; M. Stegman, Housing in New York: Study of a City 1984," at 106).

Nor have rents stopped rising since 1984. Although no comprehensive Housing and Vacancy Survey has been conducted since 1984, the residential rent component of the Consumer Price Index for the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Area shows that between January 1984 and December 1986, this index rose by 19.8 percent. Rent rises have thus outpaced by five-fold increases in the shelter grant ceiling since 1975.

Even within the rent-stabilized sector of the housing market, statutory rent increases have been far larger than the increase in the shelter grant. For example, an apartment that in 1975 would have rented at the shelter maximum for a family of four would have rented for $216 a month. If the same family continued to live in the apartment and renewed the lease every 2 years, the rent in 1986 would be $368, or $98 more than the shelter grant now in effect. If the nonshelter component of the public assistance grant were applied to pay the rent, the family would have only $228.70 ($326.70 less $98) for all monthly nonshelter expenses—when food alone is estimated by the Department of Agriculture to require $273 monthly ($63 weekly times 4⅓) and by the Community Food Resource Center to require $377 ($87 weekly times 4⅓).

At the same time, the availability of housing within the shelter maximum has declined. Between 1975 and 1984 (the last Housing and Vacancy Survey), the number of apartments in New York City renting for under $200 per month dropped by 72 percent. In that same period, the number of apartments renting for under $300 per month dropped by 44 percent. (*See* L. Bloomberg, "The Rental Housing Situation in New York City," at 90; M. Stegman, Housing in New York: Study of a City 1984, at 82).

Accordingly, the data show that it is incorrect to assume that food stamp recipients have available one-third of their income for food. To avoid homelessness and avert eviction, too many public assistance households must currently divert funds from essential nonshelter needs to pay rent. Food money cannot be spent at the grocery store if it must be paid to the landlord. By assuming that poor families have one-third off their income for food, the programs intended to alleviate hunger among our Nation's poor in fact seriously imperil the health and well being of our most needy.

EXHIBIT A—THRIFTY FOOD PLAN COST—NEW YORK CITY, AUGUST 1985

Food Item	Quantity	Price by store					
		D'Agostino	Shopwell	Victoria	Key Food (Park Slope)	Key Food (Coney Island)	Jet Foods (Coney Island)
Flour	3 lbs	$1.04	$1.04	$0.77	$0.98	$1.07	$0.98
Quick bread mix	4 oz	.20	.37	.35	.14	.30	.14
Cornmeal	8 oz	.22	.32	.30	.24	.87	.30
Rolled oats	18 oz	1.29	1.35	1.19	1.15	1.19	1.25
Farina	14 oz	.90	1.05	.78	.83	.85	.78
Grits	1½ lbs	.99	.72	.99	.83	.89	.95
Whole grain cereal	12 oz	2.29	1.85	1.85	2.03	2.15	2.35
Other cereal	15 oz	1.50	2.15	1.55	1.59	1.49	2.09
Macaroni	1 lb	.89	.75	.95	.50	.50	.89
Noodles	10 oz	.60	.69	.72	.60	.52	.61
Rice	1 lb	.65	.37	.59	.30	.33	1.15
Bread, white	22 oz	.59	1.13	1.13	1.13	.69	1.13
Bread, whole wheat	1 lb	.79	1.05	1.09	1.09	.79	1.09
Hot dog rolls	10 oz	.95	.99	.99	.99	.79	.99
Saltine crackers	16 oz	1.39	1.49	1.39	1.39	1.19	1.39
Oatmeal cookies	9 oz	1.08	.66	.79	.50	.64	.50
Popcorn, unpopped	4.5 oz	.21	.47	.99	.21	.93	.21
Ground beef, chuck	.75 lb	1.11	.90	.76	1.11	1.11	1.26
Pork shoulder roast	4.8 lb	3.79	4.27	4.56	3.79	3.79	3.79
Turkey drumstick	2.86 lb	1.40	2.55	1.17	3.12	1.40	1.40
Pork sausages	1 lb	1.99	2.79	1.39	2.29	2.19	1.89
Eggs, large	1 doz	1.05	1.15	.79	.99	.99	1.09
Kidney beans, dry	12 oz	.48	.67	.60	.59	.52	.57
Navy beans, dry	7 oz	.32	.30	.32	.30	.30	.30
Peanut butter	12 oz	.75	.75	.75	.75	.75	.75
Frankfurters	Package	1.39	1.49	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39

EXHIBIT A—THRIFTY FOOD PLAN COST—NEW YORK CITY, AUGUST 1985—Continued

Food Item	Quantity	Price by store					
		D'Agostino	Shopwell	Victoria	Key Food (Park Slope)	Key Food (Coney Island)	Jet Foods (Coney Island)
Margarine	1 lb	.69	1.39	1.29	.63	.85	.87
Shortening	1 lb	.99	1.49	1.29	.99	1.05	1.73
Vegetable oil	24 oz	1.49	3.89	1.45	1.23	1.23	1.45
Salad dressing	1 pt	1.45	1.39	1.29	.93	.97	1.39
Jelly	18 oz	1.43	1.38	1.39	.85	1.15	1.39
Syrup	12 oz	1.69	1.35	1.65	.79	.89	1.59
Raisins	15 oz	1.29	1.35	1.69	1.19	1.19	1.09
Cabbage	19 oz	.46	.23	.19	.23	.23	.34
Celery	Bunch	.99	.98	.59	.39	.39	.89
Green peppers	1 lb	.69	.89	.79	.49	.79	.79
Onions	1¼ lb	.60	.49	.69	.33	.60	.38
Potatoes	5 lb	1.99	1.32	1.29	1.19	1.59	1.49
Apples	3 lb	2.67	2.94	2.37	1.77	1.77	2.07
Bananas	1 lb	.49	.49	.49	.39	.39	.39
Oranges	5	.95	1.00	.65	.85	.65	1.00
Pears	1 lb	.59	.79	.89	.59	.59	.79
Tomatoes	2 lb	1.98	1.38	1.38	.98	.98	1.38
Tomato puree	28 oz	1.19	1.19	1.09	.65	.95	.99
Grapefruit sections	1 lb	1.09	1.05	1.15	.75	.85	.99
Peaches, juice pack	1 lb	.89	1.05	2.05	.83	.79	.93
Corn, frozen	20 oz	1.24	1.59	1.73	1.00	1.17	1.48
Mixed vegetables, frozen	10 oz	.65	1.65	.65	.50	.59	.63
Green beans, frozen	10 oz	.65	.50	.65	.59	.67	.71
Spinach, leaf, frozen	10 oz	.49	.99	.69	.53	.67	.69
Peas and carrots, frozen	10 oz	.59	1.49	.65	.53	.53	.53
Orange Juice, concentrate	12 oz	1.38	2.19	1.85	1.30	1.19	1.97
Lemonade, concentrate	6 oz	.20	.33	.49	.33	.23	.51
Milk	1 gal	2.59	2.57	2.48	1.78	2.18	2.58
Non-fat dry milk	2 lbs	5.98	5.98	4.64	3.39	4.18	3.85
Cheese, American process	12 oz	1.79	2.35	1.57	1.39	1.69	2.27
Cheese, low fat cottage	1 lb	1.19	1.25	1.39	.89	1.21	1.21
Coffee	2 oz	1.42	1.46	1.50	1.30	1.30	1.42
Tea	48 bags	1.09	1.19	1.99	.95	.95	1.49
Baking powder	12 oz	1.94	1.69	1.49	1.49	1.49	1.55
Ketchup	12 oz	.59	.99	.76	.45	.47	.68
Vinegar	16 oz	.43	.30	.69	.33	.35	.39
Prepared mustard	9 oz	.49	.75	.59	.55	.59	.59
Cornstarch	1 lb	.79	.85	.79	.65	.65	.75
Miscellaneous (cocoa, salt, sugar, herbs and spices, gelatin) [1]							
Total		88.50	98.01	89.95	76.36	79.19	88.91

[1] $13.53 added to each based on cheapest average.

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[The prepared statement of Ms. Hershkoff appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 126.]

Chairman LELAND. Thank you all. You have been very helpful to us.

Let me say that to some extent, in speaking to the members of this committee you are preaching to the believers, so to speak. Your testimony is essential for the purpose of influencing other Members of Congress to study this issue.

Under our so-called welfare reform attempts, we hope that we will be able to incorporate your suggestions. As you know, we have

a very difficult time trying to convince this administration to assist the homeless and the hungry people of our country.

In saying this I'm not being partisan. It is merely a matter of fact, as you heard from our colleague from New York, Mr. Gilman, who is a most compassionate man.

Mr. Gilman is a Republican. He and I work hand in hand together as I do with the ranking minority member of the committee. We are working on legislative recommendations to help those people who are the victims of our mistakes in Federal policies and of our bureaucracy.

We've taken very extreme measures to reduce the redtape for the private sector, the corporate entities and individuals who have come to the Federal Government to petition for certain benefits from the Government.

We have reduced the redtape for other special interest groups. Poor people, however, continue to suffer as a result of this vast and growing bureaucracy of Federal assistance programs.

There are other members of the committee interested in simplifying and coordinating Federal assistance programs. In particular Mr. Emerson from Missouri, has asked for us to expedite the investigations GAO is conducting for us on this issue. We will work to expedite that study and pass legislation to implement policy changes needed to improve program accessibility for the poor.

We have revealed programmatic problems today with very graphic examples. Ms. Jones and Damien being two examples and your testimony calling for certain measures to be taken.

With the new leadership in both the House and the Senate we can press these issues. The majority leader, whom you heard earlier, speaks not only for himself but also for the leadership of the House.

We will pursue these matters expeditiously and thoroughly. Hopefully, we can be successful. I know also that we won't get all that we want. But then, again, since I've been in politics—for 9 years in Congress and 6 years in the State Legislature of Texas—I have never gotten most of what I wanted. I know I am an idealist and continually try to hold on to my idealism in the face of the reality today in the Congress of the United States. I hope that in this Congress we can accomplish appreciably more than what we have been able to do in the last 5 or 6 years.

I have questions for each of you which I will submit to you in writing. Without objection, those questions and the responses will be incorporated in the record for the purpose of our proceedings.

In closing, I just want to say that you are all doing God's work. And I think, to some great extent, some of you ought to run—all of you ought to run—for public office, including Ms. Jones.

And hopefully Damien will, at some point, aspire to serve his country in an elected capacity. I think that we need more persons here who think like you so that we can more empathetically understand the day-to-day struggles and hopes of the poor in our country.

Our Nation will be better served if we implement policies to help persons out of the mire of poverty, as opposed to the enormous sums of money that we spend on our so-called national defense initiatives.

We spend billions of dollars on weapons of destruction. And yet we have some very great resources in the arsenal of humanity in this country that could benefit better by quality education, adequate health services, food, and housing.

You have been wonderful. Thank you so much.

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted by inclusion in the record follows:]

S U M M A R Y

HUNGER AMONG THE HOMELESS:

A Survey of 140 Shelters, Food Stamp Participation and Recommendations

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BACKGROUND

The Select Committee on Hunger has studied the causes and consequences of hunger among Americans in poverty and at risk of hunger. Through hearings and reports the Committee has focused on vulnerable groups within the poverty population. No group has more specific problems in terms of access to food than the homeless.

Hunger among the homeless is an issue that has repeatedly surfaced during Committee hearings and research. At hearings and site visits to private voluntary feeding establishments in San Francisco, New York and Houston, Members consistently heard from service providers of the increasing number of homeless persons in need of food assistance. In March 1986 the Committee held a hearing in Washington, D.C. on "Hunger Among the Homeless". Information outlining the national dimensions of the problem were presented.

DATA BASE FOR REPORT

To gain more information on the causes and solutions to hunger among the homeless the Committee reviewed the research literature on homelessness and surveyed managers of individual shelters across the nation on their ideas concerning the food assistance needs of the homeless and barriers to participation in the Food Stamp Program for their shelter residents.

140 shelter managers mailed completed questionnaires to the Committee. These shelter managers offer the Committee a widesread view of the problems and difficulties faced by shelters in serving the needs of the homeless and of the difficulties faced by the homeless in obtaining their basic food needs. The results derived from the 140 questionnaires, while not intended to be a representative sample of all homeless shelters, do confirm the findings in numerous state and local studies and testimony. **It must be noted, however, that because we have collected information only from shelter providers, there are no data on the characteristics and food assistance needs of homeless persons who are not in shelters.** These individuals may have greater food and other emergency needs as well as a much lower participation rate in food assistance programs. The survey is a one-day snapshot of food needs of the homeless in 24 states and 72 Congressional Districts.

MAJOR FINDINGS FROM SHELTER PROVIDER SURVEY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES OF FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS

* Eighty-one percent (81%) of shelter providers state that the private sector meals at shelters are a primary source of food for homeless persons; yet most (52%) shelters do not provide two main meals daily.(a) Typically, the homeless must seek out food in soup kitchens when they are accessible, from dumpsters, and other free food sites.

* Dumpsters are cited as a primary source of food for the homeless by nine percent (9%) of shelter providers.

II. LARGE PERCENTAGE OF HOMELESS NOT RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS

* Forty-five percent (45%) of the total number of homeless persons identified as eligible for food stamps (1678 out of 3,751) were reported not to be receiving benefits.

* Among the homeless in family shelters, forty-nine percent (49%) of those identified as eligible (1028 out of 2112) were reported not to be receiving food stamps.

* In shelters with no one available to assist in the food stamp application process, fifty-eight (58%) of the homeless identified as eligible were reported not to be receiving food stamps (255 out of 440).

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS TO FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION

* Twenty-one percent (21%) of all shelter providers reported their homeless residents are **denied eligibility** for food stamps because they do not have a permanent address or are sleeping outside.

* Sixty-seven percent (67%) of responding shelter providers (60 out of 90) reported their homeless residents experience **lengthy delays** in between applying for food stamps and receipt of benefits.

* **Documentation problems** were the greatest single reported barrier to participation in the Food Stamp Program for eligible homeless. Twenty-five percent (25%) of shelters reporting lengthy delays (13 out of 53) cited inadequate documentation as the cause. For fourteen percent (14%) of all shelters, inadequate documentation was not only a barrier or a cause of lengthy delay, but was reported to result in denial of food stamps for eligible homeless persons.

(a) For the purpose of this report "two main meals" are defined as lunch and dinner which generally provide at least one-half an individual's daily nutrient requirements.)

* The need for increased assistance to the homeless in applying for food stamps and the use of more shelter providers as collateral contacts in the application process is supported by the survey findings of administrative barriers to food stamp participation.

IV. SHELTER PROVIDERS APPROVE USE OF FOOD STAMPS BY HOMELESS FOR PREPARED MEALS AT SOUP KITCHENS AND/OR SHELTERS

* Sixty-five percent (65%) of all responding shelter providers would like to see the utility of food stamps for the homeless improved by allowing them to purchase or contribute to the cost of prepared meals at shelters and/or soup kitchens with food stamps -- as recently authorized in P.L. 99-570, the Omnibus Drug Enforcement, Education and Control Act (enacted October 27, 1986). The providers support this change in law primarily because they believe it would greatly improve both the quality and quantity of food assistance available to the homeless.

Moreover, many providers state that this change in statute can remove another "barrier" to food stamp participation in some areas. By allowing shelters to be certified as institutions eligible to accept food stamps, the food stamp rule denying eligibility to institutional residents will be lifted for homeless persons in certified shelters.

V. HUNGER RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS REPORTED AMONG SHELTER RESIDENTS

* Hunger related health problems reported among the homeless include: anemia, infectious diseases, low birthweight, chronic diseases requiring special diets (hypertension and diabetes), lack of infant formula, and children appearing physically underdeveloped for their age. (These reports of health problems by non-medical shelter providers parallel the findings of many published medical reports on the health problems of the homeless.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Federal Food and Health Assistance

The following recommendations are based on findings and recommendations made by numerous national, state and local organizations working for the homeless. Most of the following proposals were also suggested by shelter providers responding to the Committee's survey.

1. INCREASE ACCESS TO FOOD STAMPS FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL PERSONS AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Legislation:

a. Fund state efforts to provide Food Stamp Program information to the homeless

Using existing programs (e.g., Massachusetts) as models, the Food Stamp Act should be amended to reimburse states for activities and materials that provide information about Food Stamp Program eligibiity to the homeless.

b. Modify definition of "household" for food stamp eligiblity

To sustain family support systems and improve food assistance to the "hidden homeless", those who are forced to double up in the homes of relatives, the Food Stamp Act should be amended to remove the relationship rule prohibiting parents and children, or siblings, who live together from being considered as separate housholds. This would result in the determination of separate households only when household members do not customarily purchase food and prepare meals together for home consumption.

Oversight:

a. Encourage prescreening for public assistance and food stamps at local shelters

USDA and DHHS should be required to work with states toward the development of public/private cooperative efforts to provide program application assistance for food stamps and other programs, including SSI, AFDC, Social Security Disability Insurance, General Relief, Veterans and Medicaid benefits. Such application assistance should also be targeted to the homeless who are preparing to leave shelters and move to a permanent residence.

b. Monitor state implementation of legislation requiring food stamp issuance to the eligible homeless

The mandate of the Food Security Act of 1985 that state agencies provide a method of coupon issuance to eligible homeless persons should be monitored by USDA to ensure its rapid and effective

implementation.

c. Assure Provision of technical assistance to states to clarify eligibility of homeless for food stamps

USDA should be required to disseminate examples of state and local policy memoranda which clarify the eligibility of the homeless (including the Missouri and Massachusetts memoranda) to all state agencies administering the Food Stamp Program and work with state and local agencies to incorporate similar provisions into their program manuals.

d. Monitor implementation of new legislation requiring pre-release certification of mentally ill for food stamps and Supplemental Security Income benefits

P.L. 99-570 includes a provision which orders the Secretary of HHS and the Secretary of USDA to jointly develop a system allowing individuals to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamp benefits in a combined application prior to discharge or release from a public institution (such as a mental hospital or prison). This legislation intends to ease the transition to the community and to prevent homelessness for the mentally ill and incarcerated. The implementation of this new system should be monitored to determine its effectiveness in improving food stamp and SSI participation by eligible residents of institutions.

2. INCREASE UTILITY OF FOOD STAMPS FOR THE HOMELESS

Oversight:

With the enactment of P.L. 99-570, the Omnibus Drug Enforcement, Education and Control Act, homeless individuals who qualify for food stamps are authorized to use them to purchase prepared meals at certified nonprofit soup kitchens or homeless shelters, on a voluntary basis. This new option should be carefully monitored and evaluated to determine its effectiveness in increasing the utility of food stamps for the homeless, as well as in improving the number and quality of meals available to them from the nonprofit sector.

3. REQUIRE USDA TO INCREASE SURPLUS COMMODITY DONATIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Legislation:

USDA should be encouraged to donate more surplus commodities (Section 32 and 416 bonus) to soup kichens and shelters for use in meal preparation. Innovative use of Section 32 (surplus dairy products), such as the processing of nonfat dry milk into instant breakfasts for distribution to the homeless, should also be encouraged.

4. PROVIDE GRANTS FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TARGETTED TO THE HOMELESS

Legislation:

A program should be funded for a minimum of three years, to be administered by DHHS, providing grants to local non-profit health care organizations for the establishment of physical and mental health care services targetted to the homeless.

B. Emergency and Long Term Actions Beyond Food Assistance

In addition to the recommendations outlined in the section above, the homeless need more **emergency services**--including beds, food, warm clothing, and health care. Once people have these basic necessities, **transitional services** such as those listed below are required to assist the homeless in becoming self-sufficient: programs to encourage homeless children and teenagers to complete their education; job training and placement programs associated with shelters and day centers for the homeless; supportive services such as family counseling and day care for young children; and, expanded community mental health facilities.

Further, to prevent homelessness, increased public and private efforts toward **long-term solutions** must be initiated, including: curtailment of the decline in affordable housing stock for the poor; construction and rehabilitation of low-cost housing; establishment of more group residences for the mentally ill; and, provision of technical and financial assistance to those low-income renters or homeowners threatened with evictions or mortgage foreclosures.

Through block grant programs, the Federal government has been a source of funds in some states for activities such as those recommended above. Services provided by the private sector to homeless persons have also increased significantly over the last few years. However, the growth in the numbers of homeless and the evidence of hunger and serious physical and mental health problems, particularly among homeless families with children, clearly demonstrates these efforts are not sufficient.

Government at the Federal, state, and local levels (the Federal government through the Emergency Assistance Program in many states) are paying exorbitant costs for short-term emergency remedies. Federal programs and funds can be used more effectively. In cooperation with state and local governments and the private sector, we must take on the moral and fiscal imperative to eliminate homelessness and hunger. Toward this end, the Committee strongly endorses the enactment of a strong Federal policy including the implementation of the policies and programs recommended above.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER - FEBRUARY 1987

HOMELESSNESS FACT SHEET

HOMELESSNESS INCREASING

---Since 1983 the U.S. Conference of Mayors has reported an annual increase in the demand for emergency shelter in its cities of 20-38%.

---The National Coalition for the Homeless reports that in 1986 alone, the demand for emergency shelter increased an average of 20-25% over 1985.

---In 1986 the most significant change in the homeless population reported by major cities was the growth in the number of families with children.

WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

---A 1986 survey of 25 major cities by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found the average composition of the homeless population to be: 28% families, 56% single men, and 15% single women. (1)

---A study of Boston's shelters for homeless families found that two-thirds of homeless children were under five years old. (2)

---The Department of Labor estimates that 25-33% of homeless persons in the United States are veterans. (3)

---An average of 29% of the homeless population in 25 U.S. cities are mentally ill. (4)

---The U.S. Conference of Mayors found nearly one in five homeless persons held full-time or part-time jobs. (5)

WHERE ARE THE HOMELESS?

The homeless can be found staying in emergency shelters, cars, cardboard boxes, bus and train depots, abandoned buildings, and over steam vents and under bridges. (6) Less visible are those doubled-up or tripled-up in the apartments of friends and relatives. An estimated 40% of 1.3 million available public housing units nationwide are housing two or more families per unit. (7)

UNMET NEEDS

---The Department of Health and Human Services reports that many eligible homeless persons have difficulty gaining access to federal benefit programs, such as food stamps, supplemental security income and Veterans Administration benefits. (8)

---In 25 cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, an average of 24% of the demand for emergency shelter goes unmet. (9)

---In 18 of the cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, emergency shelters must turn away people in need because of lack of resources. (10)

---Families with children were identified by 18 of 25 cities surveyed as a specific group for whom emergency shelter is particularly inadequate. (11)

---Seventeen large and medium-sized cities report a total homeless population of 230,000 people but only 38,000 emergency shelter beds. (12)

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

---Housing costs for low and moderate income families and elderly persons have escalated sharply: the General Accounting Office reports that among lower income households, the number paying more than half their income for rent and utilities increased from 3.7 million in 1975 to 6.3 million in 1983. (13)

---Construction and rehabilitation of low-cost housing helps to offset the large loss of such housing that occurs each year due to condominium conversions, rent increases, abandonment, and decay. Since 1981, federal support for activities to help replenish the shrinking stock of low-rent housing has been cut by more than two-thirds.

---The U.S. Conference of Mayors found that the demand for publicly assisted housing during 1986 increased in 23 cities by an average of 40%. The average waiting period for assisted housing is 18 months and over two-thirds of the cities surveyed have closed the waiting lists. Safe, decent and affordable housing stock available to low- and moderate-income households decreased in over half of the 25 cities polled. (14)

POVERTY (15)

---In 1985, the most recent year for which data is available, 14% of Americans -- or nearly one in every seven -- lived below the official poverty line ($10,989 for a family of four). Among children, the poverty rate was 23%.

---There were 33.1 million Americans below the poverty line in 1985. This was 3.8 million more poor persons, including 900,000 more poor children, than were in poverty in 1980.

DECLINE IN VALUE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR

---In constant dollars (adjusted for inflation), benefits provided through the Aid for Dependent Children Program (AFDC), the primary cash grant for low-income children and their caretakers, declined 33% between 1970 and 1986. (16)

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION WITHOUT APPROPRIATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

---According to the National Institute of Mental Health, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill led to homelessness because of the nationwide failure to systematically plan for community alternatives for the newly-released. States transferred resources from state institutions to other budget areas, and not to much-needed community programs. (17)

---More than half of the cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors noted that services that would aid deinstitutionalized persons' re-integration into the community were inadequate or non-existent. (18)

NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS

According to shelter operators and emergency food providers, the homeless depend primarily on soup kitchens and shelters for food. In some communities, however, there are no soup kitchens, and shelters often serve no meals or food with limited nutritional value.

---Reports from around the nation reveal that emergency food providers cannot serve all those in need. For example, in 13 major cities emergency food providers must turn away people in need because of lack of resources. (19)

---The major nutritional deficiencies reported among the homeless are in calories, calcium, iron, vitamins, and minerals. (20) A significant proportion of the homeless also have chronic health problems, including high blood pressure, which require special diets and/or nutritional supplements. A study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that many homeless persons experience serious health problems: 28% of the study's subjects suffered respiratory diseases; 21% had chronic lung disease; 19% experienced limb disorders; 14% suffered from hypertension; and 9% had heart disease. (21)

Homeless mothers and infants face severe health problems. A study in New York City found that (22):

---40% of pregnant mothers living in welfare hotels received no prenatal care during pregnancy.

---The rate of low birthweight babies born to mothers living in welfare hotels was more than twice as high as that of the city as a whole.

---The infant mortality rate among homeless families living in welfare hotels was two times that of the city population.

FEDERAL FUNDING TARGETTED TO THE HOMELESS

The following fiscal year 1987 funds are earmarked for direct services targetted to the homeless:

Agency Name/ Program Name	Projected Outlays for FY 1987
Federal Emergency Management Agency/ Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program*	$120 Million
Department of Housing and Urban Development/ Emergency Shelter Grants Program	$10 Million
Department of Housing and Urban Development/ Transitional Housing Demonstration Program	$5 Million
National Institute of Mental Health/ Community Support Program Service Demonstration Grants for Homeless Mentally Ill Persons**	$1.61 Million
Department of Labor/ Jobs for Homeless Veterans Demonstration***	$0.25 Million
TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDING TARGETTED TO THE HOMELESS FOR FY 1987	$136.86 Million

*This includes the $50 million supplemental appropriation in P.L. 100-6, enacted on February 12th, 1987.

**Fourteen demonstration projects to improve outreach, case management, and coordination of community-based services.

***Provides $25,000 to each of ten cities for demonstration initiatives to place homeless veterans in jobs and refer those who are not job-ready to appropriate treatment facilities and entitlement programs.

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(3) Arthur Blank, Director of Readjustment Counseling Services, Department of Medicine Surgery, Veterans Administration, in testimony before the Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Homeless and Unemployed Veterans, September 10, 1986 (Serial No. 99-60).

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Hunger Report

Select Committee on Hunger
U.S. House of Representatives

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HOMELESS FACE BARRIERS IN APPLYING FOR FOOD STAMPS

Although the Food Security Act of 1985 directed the state agencies administering the food stamp program to "provide a method of certifying and issuing coupons to eligible households that do not reside in permanent dwellings or who do not have fixed mailing addresses," documentation requirements and household definition continue as barriers confronted by the homeless in the standard food stamp application process.

Consistent reports from many local private, nonprofit organizations providing assistance and information to homeless persons reveal that they have difficulty meeting the documentation requirements and suggest that food stamp offices need to establish more flexible guidelines for verifying identity, income, and lack of residence.

For example, Project Bread (a private, nonprofit organization providing information to food stamp applicants in Boston) reports that the requirement for a specific form of picture identification places a particular burden on the homeless. **Without special provisions at social service offices for issuing photo ID's, the homeless who do not already hold a drivers license or similar form of identification have difficulty satisfying this requirement.**

The New York City Office of Legal Services, the Community Action Agency of Schenectady and Project Bread state that homeless persons are required to present a **Social Security** card when applying for food stamps. Many do not have these cards and experience lengthy delays in completing the food stamp application process because it takes approximately three weeks to process a replacement card.

Another major documentation problem cited is the requirement that applicants present a **birth certificate for all members of their household.** The director of a shelter for homeless women and children in Little Rock, Arkansas, reports homeless residents of her shelter often have several children, no income and no birth certificates. Consequently, she indicated, they are prevented from continuing the application process because they cannot afford to purchase duplicate birth certificates at a cost of two dollars each.

In addition to these documentation problems, advocates from the National Anti-Hunger Coalition report that the **"household definition"** which is used to determine food stamp eligibility disqualifies the "hidden homeless" (families who have moved in with parents or siblings to avoid homelessness from receiving benfits for which they would be eligible if they were livin in shelters or on the streets. The current definition assumes that all income is available to everyone in the household, even when individual family units continue to handle their food and financial resources separately. As a consequence, these families may be forced to choose between maintaining stable shelter or obtaining the food assistance they need.

Service providers in several communities are working with food stamp agencies to reduce the barriers to participation for the homeless. Projec Bread, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare, has printed food stamp information sheets for distribution to the homeless and advocates for the homeless. The Department has established a special food stamp pick-up site for single homeless adults on general assistance. In addition, Project Bread is encouraging local shelter and soup kitchen providers to act as "collateral contacts" for their homeless clients and thus assist them in verifying identity, income and lack of residence for their food stamp application.

Excerpt for the Record

A STUDY OF HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE SKID ROW AREA OF LOS ANGELES

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Public Support Benefits

It would be difficult to think of a population more in need of, and more eligible for, financial entitlements than the homeless population. As data from this and other studies have indicated, homeless individuals are not only overwhelmingly poor, which in most cases qualifies them for the "safety net" which welfare is supposed to offer; they are also more likely, as a population, to include significant numbers of persons with chronic mental health problems and/or severe substance abuse problems, either of which might qualify them for disability benefits. Previous studies have indicated that homeless individuals do, in fact, tend to see themselves as being in need of public support: 73.7% of the individuals in Ball and Havassy's sample (1984) cited the need for financial entitlements, for instance, while 88.7% of Morse et al.'s shelter sample believed they needed financial help (1985). Even so, relatively few of the individuals in samples recently reported on were actually receiving such benefits. Fischer et al. (1986), for instance, noted that only one-third of their shelter sample were receiving some kind of public support.

Table PS1 Disability Benefits at Some Point in Life

	Number	% of Item	% of Total
No	241	76.3	76.3
Yes[1]	75	23.7	23.7
SSDI	(12)	(16.0)	(3.8)
SSI	(28)	(37.3)	(8.9)
VA	(13)	(17.3)	(4.1)
Calif (SDI)	(23)	(30.7)	(7.3)
Other	(10)	(13.3)	(3.2)
Total	316	100.0	100.0

[1]more than one mention allowed

As part of this study, homeless individuals were asked a wealth of questions regarding their experiences with disability benefits, social security benefits other than disability benefits, and general relief. Table PS1 summarizes the extent to which this sample of inner-city homeless adults have received disability benefits at some point in their lives, and the kinds of benefits they have received. As Table PS1 reveals, approximately one-quarter of the sample (23.7%) have received disability benefits over the course of their lives. More of these individuals mentioned receiving Supplementary Security Income (SSI) than any other disability benefit but even so, only 8.9% of the sample as a whole have received SSI over the course of their lives, a surprising fact given the high percentage of those with chronic mental illness who should be eligible for such benefits. Many individuals mentioned receiving California State Disability Insurance, a compensation program for individuals injured while on the job. Individuals who received disability benefits at some point in their lives also mentioned SSDI and Veteran's benefits in smaller numbers.

Table PS2 takes a closer look at those individuals who have never received disability benefits. Most of these individuals believe that they should never have received disability benefits. More than a quarter (27.5%, 20.9% of the entire sample), however, expressed the belief that they <u>should</u> be receiving disability benefits. Indeed, of those who felt they should be receiving benefits, almost half (46.2%) had applied for them, often more than once. For the most part, these individuals reported being told that their disability was not severe enough to require benefits. Those who believed they should be receiving benefits but who had not applied for them offered a number of reasons for their failure to do so, the primary one being that the application process was simply too difficult.

Table PS2 Individuals Who Have Never Received Disability (N=241)

	Number	% of those who never received disability	% of sample as a whole
Feel they shouldn't have	174	72.5	55.1
Feel they should have	66	27.5	20.9
Total	240	100.0	76.0
Of those who felt they should have:			
Applied	30	46.2	9.5
Once	(14)	(46.7)	(4.4)
Twice	(6)	(20.0)	(1.9)
Three or more times	(10)	(33.0)	(3.2)
Didn't Apply[1]	35	53.8	(11.1)
Too difficult	(10)	(31.3)	(3.2)
Believed self ineligible	(8)	(25.0)	(2.5)
Didn't know how/where	(6)	(18.8)	(1.9)
Too ill or handicapped	(2)	(6.3)	(.6)
Total	65	100.0	20.6

[1]more than one mention allowed

Table PS3 examines the experiences of those individuals who have, at some point in their lives, received disability benefits. Of these 72 individuals, the majority (63.8%, 14.6% of the entire sample) are not currently receiving benefits. Most of these 46 individuals lost their disability benefits more than a year ago (77.8%), usually because they recovered from the disability or injury which led to their benefits (54.1% of these cases) but often because (1) their disability funds were exhausted (18.9%), (2) they moved, or left a program, and lost their benefits in the process (16.2%) or ,3) a variety of other reasons. The majority of these individuals (79.6%, 11.1% of the entire sample) received disability benefits only once and in most cases (73.3%) for a year or less; the median here was five months.

Only 26 individuals--slightly more than a third (36.1%) of those individuals who have ever received disability payments--are currently receiving

Table PS3 Individuals Who have Received Disability (N=72)

	Number	% of those who have received disability	% of sample as a whole
NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING	46	63.8	14.6
When lost			
Within the last 6 months	4	8.9	1.3
Within the last year	6	13.3	1.9
Within the last 2 years	5	11.1	1.6
Within 3 to 5 years	17	37.8	5.4
More than 5 years ago	13	28.9	4.1
Total	45	100.0	14.3
Number times received			
Once	35	79.6	11.1
Twice	6	13.6	1.9
Three or more	3	6.8	.9
Total	44	100.0	13.9
Mean = 1.3			
Median = 1			
Number months received			
6 months or less	28	62.2	8.9
7-12 months	5	11.1	1.6
13-24 months	4	8.9	1.3
25-60 months	4	8.9	1.3
More than 60 months	4	8.9	1.3
Total	45	100.0	10.5
Mean 19.7			
Median = 5			
CURRENTLY RECEIVING	26	36.1	8.2
Number times received			
Once	18	69.2	5.7
Twice	4	15.4	1.3
Three or more	4	15.4	1.3
Total	26	100.0	8.2
Mean = 1.8			
Median = 1			
Number months received			
6 months or less	4	15.4	1.3
7-12 months	3	11.6	.9
13-24 months	3	11.6	.9
25-60 months	7	26.9	2.2
More than 60 months	9	34.6	2.8
Total	26	100.1	8.2
Mean = 77.2			
Median = 48			

such benefits. This means that of the sample as a whole, only 8.2% are currently receiving disability benefits in spite of the large numbers eligible for SSI (as indicated by the estimated 28% of the sample who are chronically mentally ill). These individuals also tend to report receiving disability benefits only once, though 30.8% have received disability payments at least one other time in the past. As a group, they tend to have received disability benefits for more than a year (73.1%) and in many cases for more than two years (61.5%).

We see, then, that less than a quarter of the sample have received disability benefits during their lives and that in many of these cases, these benefits were temporary, stemming from work-related injuries. Moreover, only 8.2% of the sample are currently receiving benefits in spite of the much larger number of individuals who feel they should be receiving such benefits. It is true that the small number of individuals who are currently receiving disability payments have done so for relatively long periods of time, in a third of the cases for more than 5 years. But it is also clear from these data that applying for and receiving disability, even when one has a disability which seems to warrant financial entitlements, is an endeavor fraught with problems. Further, while it is apparent that some of the individuals who have received disability benefits at some point in their lives did so as a result of work-related accidents which took place well into their pasts and which resulted in time-limited payments, it is also clear from the disability data that many of the individuals who once received disability benefits for chronic disabling conditions (i.e. SSDI, SSI and VA benefits) are no longer receiving those benefits--perhaps as many as half have somehow lost their benefits. If their conditions were truly chronic, it is likely that they are still disabled but are now having to manage without the help of financial entitlements.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, FEBRUARY 4, 1987

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to testify today in support of H.R. 558, a bill which provides $500 million in assistance to our nation's homeless in fiscal year 1987 (FY '87). I would like to take this opportunity to thank and commend the gentleman from Washington, Mr. Foley, the distinguished Majority Leader, for introducing this important measure, and the members of this subcommittee, especially you, Mr. Gonzalez, the Chairman, and Rep. Stewart McKinney, the Ranking Minority Member, for holding these hearings in such an expeditious and timely manner.

H.R. 588 increases Federal assistance for the homeless from the original $85 million level appropriated during the 99th Congress for FY '87 to the more realistic level of $500 million. Moreover, this legislation will put special emphasis on aid to families and children.

Members of Congress were continually reminded of the plight of the homeless by the Community for Creative Non-Violence, whose members camped out next to a statue honoring the homeless on the eastern front of the Capitol grounds for seven weeks. This protest ended when the Speaker of the House, Rep. Jim Wright, endorsed the legislation we are discussing today.

Estimates of the number of homeless in our nation vary from 350,000 to more than three million Unlike the skid row "derelicts" who comprised the typical homeless population of the 1960's, today's homeless represent many diverse groups including the unemployed, the mentally ill, evicted families, the aged, alcoholics, drug addicts, abused spouses, abused young people, and abandoned children. Although the causes of homelessness have not been researched to any significant extent, reasons most commonly cited include unemployment, scarcity of affordable housing, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, and social service and disability cutbacks. Obviously, in addition to providing immediate relief to those currently in need of assistance, it is imperative that the problem of homelessness be attacked at its roots. Yet, no single Federal agency or program focuses its efforts specifically on the homeless. H.R. 558 establishes an Interagency Office on Homelessness in the Department of Health and Human Services so that public resources and programs will be used in a more coordinated manner to meet the urgent needs of the homeless.

According to a study recently released by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 22 of 25 major cities report an average increase of 25 percent in the number of homeless people seeking help. It is important to remember that the metropolitan areas surrounding the core cities also are undergoing a dramatic increase in the number of homeless people. My own Congressional district is in close proximity to New York City. Westchester County, a portion of which I represent, is the closest of the four counties I represent to New York City. Westchester has seen its homeless population

rise from 374 homeless families, including 714 children, and 263 homeless individuals in July, 1985 to 708 families, including 1373 children, and 614 individuals as of November, 1986. In Orange County, a portion of which I also represent, the Department of Social Services reported that they treated an average of 80 homeless people a month between February and December, 1985. This figure rose to an average of 200 cases per month throughout 1986, with spending rising from $630,000 in 1985 to $1.86 million in 1986. Rockland County also has experienced an approximate 14 percent increase in homeless persons from 1985 to 1986.

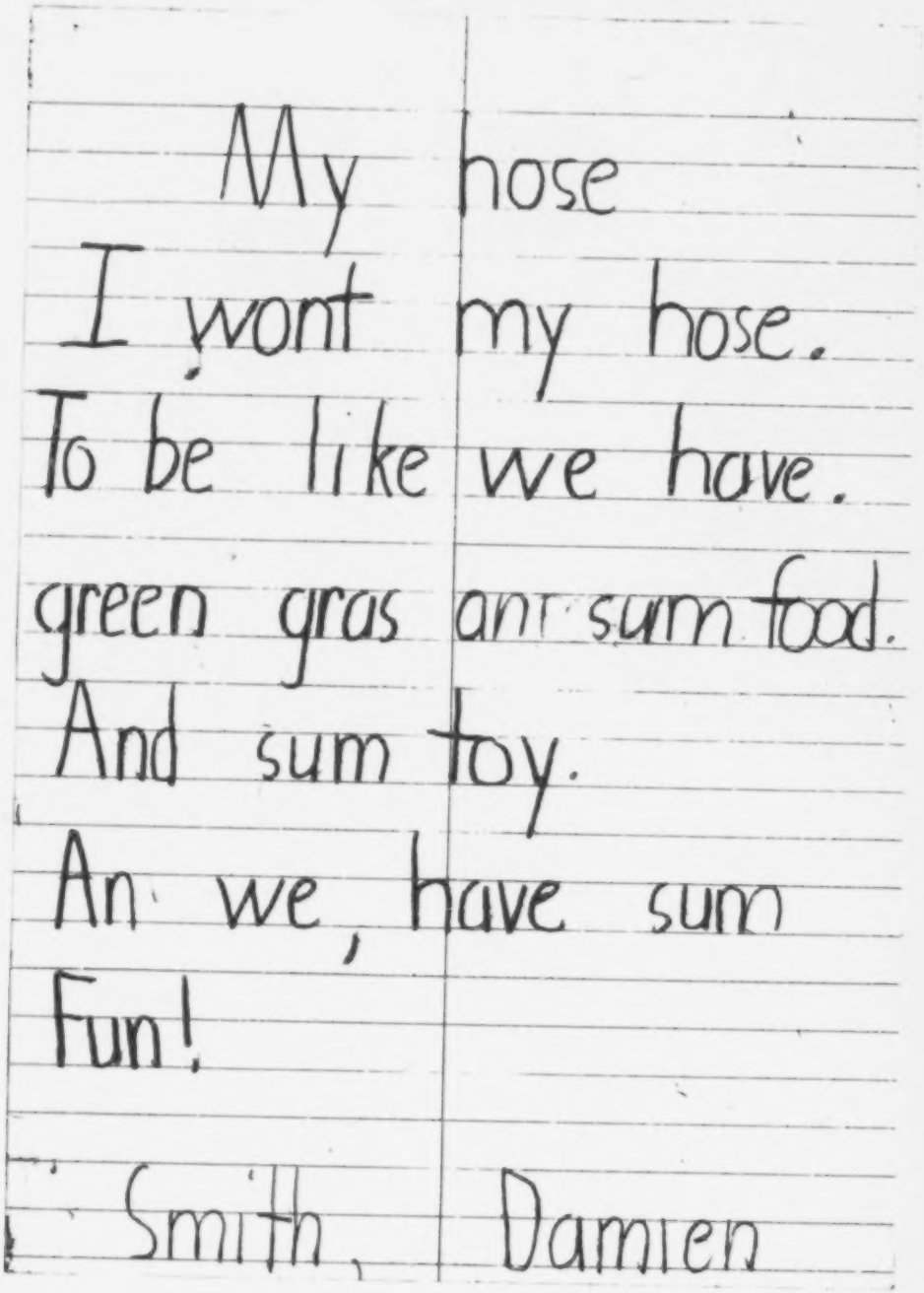
As these statistics indicate, the 22nd Congressional district of New York has seen a dramatic rise in its own homeless population, and must take steps to assist these people. Accordingly, I have cosponsored, among other measures, H.R. 558, which provides an additional $70 million to the $70 million already funded for the food and shelter program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and another $130 million to two programs, the Emergency Shelter Grants Program and the Transitional Housing Program, which received a combined funding level of $15 million.

With regard to health care, H.R. 558 provides $50 million in grants for community-based health care providers to deliver comprehensive, on-site primary care and appropriate casework to the homeless to meet both their mental and physical health needs. Another $50 million would also be provided to community health centers. Underutilized Federal, State and local property and buildings will also be employed to combat homelessness under this legislation. $100 million will be used to establish the

Interagency Office on Homelessnes and then provide grants to make best use of surplus property to help meet the needs of the homeless. At least half of these funds would be reserved to help families and children, including child care facilities.

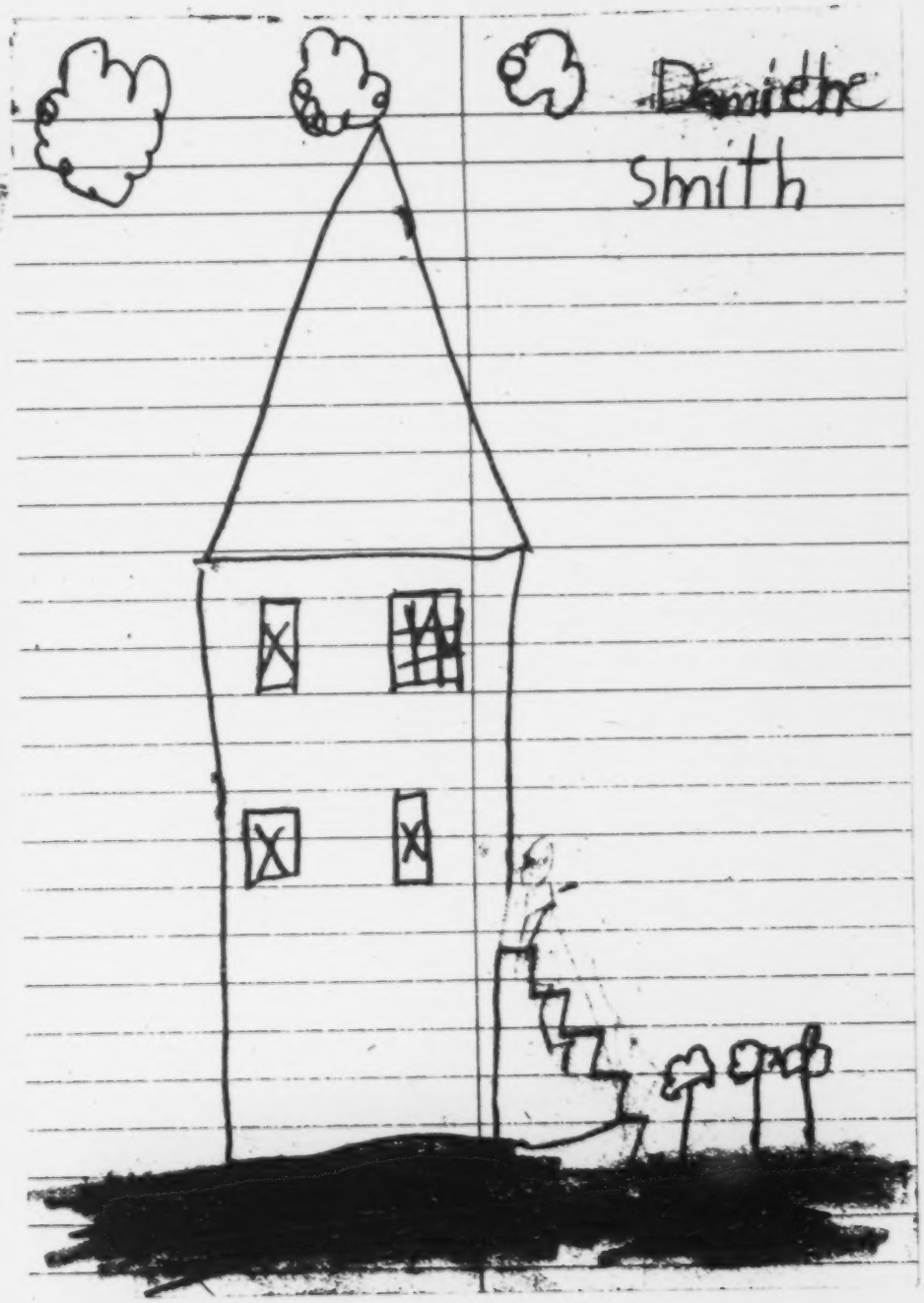
I am certain that the members of this subcommittee realize that my own testimony illustrates not only the problems facing the 22nd Congressional district of New York, but the problems facing many areas of the Nation. H.R. 558 does dramatically increase Federal spending to help the homeless, but I sincerely believe this increased spending is necessary and, in fact, will still not fully address this problem. Indeed, the $500 million pricetag of this legislation is well below other proposals to assist the homeless, some of which range up to $5 billion. I consider H.R. 558 to be as fiscally responsible as is possible given the gravity of the homeless situation. Accordingly, I urge the members of this subcommittee to lend their full support to this important measure so that desperately needed assistance for our nation's homeless will be quickly delivered.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAMIEN, 7-YEAR-OLD SON OF NANCY JONES, HOMELESS PARENT, ST. LOUIS, MO.



My hose
I wont my hose.
To be like we have.
green gras ant sum food.
And sum toy.
An we, have sum
Fun!

Smith, Damien


Smith

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS S. FOLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear today before the Select Committee to discuss H.R. 558 "The Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act" and the need for a continuing national commitment to solve the problems of hunger and homelessness. Before I go any further Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the help you have already rendered in formulating the health provisions of H.R. 558 and your contribution to the amendment which we expect to add to that bill relating to hunger among the homeless. In this latter endeavor both you and the gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta, are to be highly commended.

Of course, the bill which Mr. McKinney and I have introduced is an emergency bill. The monies authorized there would be available immediately. But we need to continue our efforts whether the homeless are in the headlines or not. The bill you have introduced Mr. Chairman, H.R. 286, ensures that our attention will continue to be focused on the alleviation of all of the problems faced by the homeless and, hopefully, the eventual solution of this national problem. I hope that your committee and other committees will seriously consider the whole range of causes and possible cures for homelessness.

Mr. Chairman there is disagreement on exactly how many homeless people there are in our country. I do not find this surprising in light of the substantial problems entailed in making any estimate of a transient, disparate population who, by definition, are without addresses. But there is substantial agreement that the numbers of homeless people are increasing, and increasing at an accelerated rate.

Three recent studies, including one by the U.S. Conference of Mayors have found that the homeless population increased by an alarming 25 percent in 1986. The Mayors' study, conducted by a task force headed by Raymond L. Flynn, the distinguished Mayor of the City of Boston, found that in 70 percent of the 25 major cities surveyed homeless people were being turned away from shelters. In all they estimated that about one quarter of all the homeless were being turned away.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact of all is that the fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children. Although the total proportion of the homeless represented by this group is still believed to be small, they illustrate that the problem has gone far beyond the conventional views of the homeless which many of us held in earlier years. No longer can anyone say that the homeless are merely those who could settle down but choose not to. They are now people who desperately need shelter but cannot get it.

The Salvation Army has found that increasing numbers of homeless people among the 60,000 it shelters each night actually have jobs but are beneath the poverty line. Over half of the homeless also suffer from either mental illness or substance abuse problems. They need our help Mr. Chairman and we have a moral obligation to extend a helping hand to the homeless and provide at least the bare minimum of shelter, food and medical

care that they need.

Mr. Chairman H.R. 558 represents a serious effort to address this growing problem. It would authorize $20 million in addition to the $50 million which has just been signed into law for emergency food and shelter under the the Federal Emergency Management Agency; an additional $100 million in grants to localities for extra shelter space and an additional $30 million for localities to provide transitional group homes for the homeless who can move out of emergency shelters; $100 million would finance 4,000 rental subsidy certificates, where the federal government agrees to subsidize rent for 5 years and the certificate can be used to help a succession of homeless families.

The bill also allows $100 million in health care for the homeless, one quarter through a competitive grant program and three quarters through centers directed solely toward the homeless. Finally, $100 million would be used by to identify underutilized federal, state and local government buildings which could be used in various capacities as facilities to help the homeless.

In addition to these provisions we will add what I feel are some modest but very necessary improvements in our efforts to feed the homeless. These improvements, which have bi-partisan support Mr. Chairman, will extend the Temporary Emergency Food Program for the homeless and make it possible to count a larger amount of shelter costs against income for purposes of determining food stamp eligibility. This would be the first step in a consistent effort to prevent homelessness before it begins.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 558 does not attempt to assign blame or point fingers. It is an honest effort to do what we can, however little and however belatedly, to relieve the misery of homelessness for hundreds of thousands of Americans of both sexes and all races and ages, many of whom are ill, or not able to care for themselves; and all of whom deserve the minimum that human decency requires of those of us who are more fortunate.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN W. BODE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND CONSUMER SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommitee, I appreciate the opportunity today to present the Administration's views concerning nutrition and the homeless. We share your concern about finding effective ways to provide adequate nutrition for the homeless.

At the outset, I would like to observe that the administration views homelessness as a complex problem best handled at the local level where the precise dimensions of the problem can be determined and where the local government can be flexible in meeting the diverse needs of this population.

Also, I would like to point out that much is already being done to assist the homeless.

Existing programs, such as Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income, Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), VA Benefits, and Social Security Retirement and

Disability Benefits, are currently available to the homeless who meet basic eligibility criteria.

In addition, the federal government funds a variety of discretionary programs which can be used to address the needs of the homeless. There are programs generally thought of as meeting the needs of the homeless, such as FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program and the HHS Runaway and Homeless Youth Program for homeless children. Then there are programs serving more general purposes, which states and localities can use to meet the needs of the homeless, such as the Community Development Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant. For example, more than $100 million in Community Development Block Grant funds have been spent to date to address the shelter and other needs of the homeless.

Also, the federal government conducts research and demonstration projects on the problems of the homeless. For example, HUD, in a joint effort with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, is conducting demonstrations for the chronically mentally ill, many of whom may be homeless. HUD has committed approximately $100 million in housing rental subsidies, which will be provided along with other services.

Also, the federal government has undertaken special projects with regard to the homeless, many initiated by the Interagency Task Force on the Homeless, headed by HHS. For example, the task force works to make surplus Federal equipment and supplies available to groups helping the homeless.

The Administration's 1988 budget proposes to establish a clearinghouse on the homeless under the Interagency Task Force on the Homeless. The clearinghouse, funded at $250,000 a year in 1987 and 1988, will provide information and technical assistance to states and local communities interested in establishing or expanding shelters and other programs for the homeless. This effort will facilitate the effective design and implementation of local homeless programs. The clearinghouse will provide information and advice on the following:

- Federal and other resources available to help the homeless.

- Information on how to set up programs based on the results of research, demonstrations, and the experience of model programs.

- "How to" information dealing with special problems, such as zoning, factors that should be considered in dealing with the mentally ill, and so forth.

The FY 1988 budget proposes no changes in individual entitlement program eligibility or benefit standards that would affect the homeless, so that these programs will remain fully available to the homeless population. The budget asks funding of $80 million for FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program. It also requests substantial funding for other discretionary programs that can be used to help the homeless.

Among the budget proposals for research and demonstrations related to the homeless are:

- A request for $5 million in 1988 budget authority for the Transitional Housing Demonstration Program in HUD, the same level appropriated for their new, congressionally mandated program in 1987. These demonstrations test innovative approaches for helping homeless individuals to leave the shelter system.

- An increase from $15 million in 1987 to $20 million in 1988 for the community support programs of demonstration grants in HHS' Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA). The additional funding would be provided to complete demonstrations involving the provision of mental health services in the community to the homeless.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to review the programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) which provide assistance to the homeless.

Turning to programs dealing specifically with nutrition, it is important to note the magnitude of the Federal food assistance effort, which is dramatized by the Fiscal Year 1986 record. During that year, just over $20 billion in food assistance was provided. Approximately 19.4 million people a month received food stamps, valued at $10.6 billion. During the course of the year, approximately 34 million persons were served by the Food Stamp Program. Further, the Food Stamp Program provides benefits to all eligible applicants. Thus, the Food Stamp Program is responsive to changing economic conditions. The program grew to serve 22.6 million persons in March of 1983, but as the economy improved, participation has declined. During November 1986, the month for which the most recent participation data are available, an average of 19.1 million persons participated. In addition to being responsive to economic changes, the Food Stamp Program is indexed to the cost of food so the real purchasing power of food stamps is maintained over time.

In Fiscal Year 1986 there were almost 24 million average daily participants in the National School Lunch Program subsidized at an annual cost of nearly $3.6 billion. Average

daily participation in the School Breakfast Program was 3.5 million. About forty-eight percent of these school meals are free and another six percent are provided at reduced price. The School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs serve free and reduced price meals to all children meeting eligibility criteria. Every child from a household with income below 130 percent of the poverty line in a participating school is eligible to receive a free meal, and if household income falls between 130-185 percent of poverty, that child is eligible for a reduced price meal.

The WIC Program does not require a fixed address as a condition of program eligibility, which might preclude participation by the homeless. In addition, the Department encourages States to make special efforts to target benefits to homeless needy persons.

One particular national level effort was instrumental in reaching homeless persons potentially eligible for WIC. In late 1984, and in 1985, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) entered into a cooperative effort with the National Citizens Committee for Food and Shelter. The Committee, a non-partison, non-profit group of private citizens with private funding, actively cooperates with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on a variety of homeless service projects. The committee came to FNS to address food needs of the homeless upon the recommendation of DHHS. As a result of the cooperative effort, a

referral network was established between WIC local agencies and local emergency feeding programs such as food banks and soup kitchens. The Committee and FNS worked jointly to promote a network of communications between WIC and these programs. Food bank operations were notified of the availability of and eligibility criteria for WIC, provided information brochures for handout, and encouraged to refer potentially high risk homeless persons, primarily pregnant women, to WIC's comprehensive package of food help, nutrition education, and health care access. WIC clinics, in turn, were notified of voluntary local food service programs in their service areas, and were encouraged to refer non-WIC eligibles needing food help to those programs. Ten target cities representing high poverty and homelessness rates were chosen for the cooperative effort. These were: Boston, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Memphis, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and St. Louis.

At the Federal level there are ongoing efforts to stimulate referrals to the WIC Program from local organizations providing human services to needy populations. FNS has concentrated its efforts on those organizations most likely to serve high risk, such as the March of Dimes, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalitiion, Nurses Association of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, National Association of School

Nurses, and International Childbirth Educator's Association. Further, FNS encourages States to undertake similar efforts.

In Fiscal Year 1986, the WIC Program provided monthly benefits to approximately 3.3 million pregnant and post-partum women, infants, and children up to age 5 determined by a health professional to be at nutritional risk. The cost was $1.6 billion. About one-fourth of all U.S. babies under one year of age receive WIC benefits.

Participation in WIC increased 74 percent from 1.9 million to over 3.3 million persons per month during the period 1980 to 1986. Federal expenditures for WIC have more than doubled since 1980.

Food Stamp regulations have contained no barriers to participation by homeless persons since 1978. Benefits cannot be denied because a household lacks a fixed residence nor are cooking facilities required for certification. In November 1983, February 1984, and December 1984, we instructed the FNS Regional Offices to ensure that State agencies were complying with policies to permit eligible homeless people to participate in the program.

Although the Food Stamp Program was already serving

homeless people, Congress included a specific requirement in P.L. 99-198, enacted December 23, 1985, that State agencies provide a method for certifying and issuing food stamps to eligible households that do not reside in permanent dwellings or have fixed addresses. A regulation implementing this requirement was published May 21, 1986. In addition to the statutory change, the regulation also prohibited State agencies from denying eligibility to homeless persons because they could not verify residency. Prior to publication of this regulation (April 1986), we again directed the Regional Offices to ensure that the homeless provisions were being complied with by State agencies.

The Homeless Eligibility Act, which is Title XI of P.L. 99-570, the Omnibus Drug Enforcement, Education, and Control Act, approved October 27, 1986, contained several provisions affecting the food stamp participation of homeless persons. A regulation implementing these provisions is scheduled to be published in early March and go into effect on April 1, 1987. This legislative provision makes that segment of the homeless population who reside in public or private non-profit shelters for the homeless and receive more than one-half of their meals at these shelters newly eligible for the Food Stamp Program. These persons may use their food stamps to purchase meals from authorized public or private non-profit soup kitchens and shelters.

The Food Stamp Program continues to provide benefits quickly to the most needy. Applicant households with gross incomes of $150 per month or less (as well as destitute migrant or seasonal farm workers) and not more than $100 in liquid resources are entitled to benefits within five calendar days if otherwise eligible.

Through food distribution programs, USDA provides foods to State distributing agencies to help meet many of the nutritional needs of the needy, including the homeless. These programs have improved the nutritional quality of the diets of the many people participating in USDA food programs. Two such food assistance programs which have provided assistance to the needy and homeless are (1) domestic donations to families, and (2) Food Distribution Program for Charitable Institutions.

Free surplus commodities are provided to needy persons through public and nonprofit organizations. Eligible organizations include soup kitchens, food banks, and service-type organizations such as the Salvation Army and the Lions Club. Commodities being made available for distribution by State distributing agencies are nonfat dry milk, corn meal, flour, honey, cheese, rice, and butter. Since 1981 , these two programs have made over $4 billion worth of dairy and other surplus commodities available through State and local agencies to large numbers of poor and unemployed people.

Surplus commodities are distributed by USDA to schools and thousands of charitable institutions providing meals to the needy. Charitable institutions, such as churches operating soup kitchens, orphanages, and homes for the aged, receive a wide variety of surplus commodities to help provide meals to needy persons. In fiscal year 1986, nearly $234 million worth of surplus commodities were given that supplemented 1.7 billion meals in nearly 14,000 charitable institutions.

That concludes my prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman. I shall be happy to respond to your questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SARA L. BARWINSKI, A.C.S.W., ADVOCACY FACILITATOR LUTHERAN FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF MISSOURI AND CHAIRPERSON, HUNGER TASK FORCE, MISSOURI ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL WELFARE ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL ANTI-HUNGER COALITION

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. My name is Sara Barwinski. I'm a social worker on staff with Lutheran Family and Children's Services (LF&CS), located in St. Louis, Missouri. I am also representing the Missouri Association for Social Welfare as chair of the Hunger Task Force, and the National Anti-Hunger Coalition as a board member. In all these roles I have the opportunity to observe and assist persons experiencing problems in obtaining food assistance. Some of the most acute problems in accessing the Food Stamp Program are experienced by the most vulnerable and destitute of all our citizens -- the homeless. With me today are Nancy Jones and her seven year old son Damien. They can best tell you their own story in dealing with homelessness and hunger.....

TESTIMONY OF NANCY AND DAMIEN JONES

FOODSTAMPS AND THE HOMELESS

Lutheran Family and Children's Services first became aware of the problems experienced by homeless people trying to receive food stamps in late 1983. At that time the combined effects of the recession and cuts in government assistance programs left a growing number of people homeless -- both individuals and entire families like the Jones'. In trying to serve this new population we were shocked to learn that although they were obviously the most needy of our caseload, they were consistently denied food stamps. Because we feel strongly that we in the charitable, voluntary sector are <u>partners</u> with government in meeting the needs of our clients, we began to investigate why this denial of benefits was occurring.

In pursuing this question, the Missouri Department of Social Services assured us that no one was being denied benefits on the basis of having no address. However this did not square with the reality that people were experiencing. Further investigation revealed that homeless people were denied the right to apply if they could not provide an address at the reception desk. Therefore, the State had no record of any denials because applications were not taken in the first place. Homeless people could not even get their foot in the door of the system.

We were able to initiate a Test Case that set the precedent for the homeless to receive food stamps. By the summer of 1984, the State issued a clear policy directive that the homeless must be allowed to apply and that pick-up of coupons could occur at the county office to avoid the need of a mailing address. This did open the door, but as recently as last week I had a homeless client who was told he could not apply until he had an address. I would not be surprised if this efficient process of discrimination without leaving a paper trail is practiced in other parts of the country as well.

Once homeless persons apply, they still face difficulties in providing needed verification. An address is not an eligibility requirement but residency in the county of application is. How does a homeless person prove county residence? Caseworkers can use things such as previous addresses, work or school history in the county, etc., to establish a tie to the county, but what happens if those things don't exist? Collateral verification becomes very important and service providers to the homeless can work with the State to help provide such verification. However, when shelters provided the verification, it posed a Catch-22 for some clients. Caseworkers interpreted verification from a shelter as proof the

client was a resident of an institution. In reality, most shelters don't actually guarantee bed space and rarely provide adequate meals. As demonstrated by Nancy's case, often all that is provided is a donut in the morning and a sandwich at night. And yet on the basis of supposedly receiving 50% of their meals in an "institution," these homeless people are often denied Food Stamps.

Another problem homeless people face, even if they do begin to receive benefits, is continuing to receive Food Stamps. If the caseworker needs information to process the case or the client needs to be made aware of some requirement (such as work registration), it is often difficult to establish contact. In a recent case, the worker had made no attempt to inform the client of interim responsibilities because he was homeless. Even though the caseworker had the address and phone of a contact person, she assumed he could not be reached. On the other hand, the client had repeatedly tried to reach his caseworker, but she was always "unavailable."

In spite of the advocacy done in Missouri to open up the Food Stamp Program to the homeless, there were only 177 cases representing 240 homeless persons open last month. St. Louis had 74 cases, representing 93 persons -- which represents service to a mere fraction of the over 10,000 homeless persons estimated to reside in St. Louis.

Clearly we have a long way to go in meeting this important need. One thing that would help is Food Stamp Outreach for the Homeless. This needs to go beyond a publicity campaign to include staff training in issues unique to homeless applications and a system designed where communication with the client can be maintained. An ombudsperson available to insure adequate service would also be beneficial.

HIDDEN HOMELESS - FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Another area of concern are the "hidden homeless" and their difficulty in receiving Food Stamps because of the definition of "household." There are thousands of people like Nancy who, because of scarce resources, find themselves doubling and tripling up with others (usually family members) in order to keep a roof over their heads. These families who are already undergoing hardship are the very ones we "punish" for living with family members by not treating their income as a separate household. These living situations often have the potential for abuse, with too many people living in very close quarters. We aggravate the potential for abuse and hunger by depriving them of the Food Stamp resource. These households are homelessness in the making, "hidden" from our view. Like Nancy, the next step for many of them will be a shelter or the streets. In fact, over 54% of the homeless households in St. Louis are women with children -- and 60% of these were residing with others immediately before seeking shelter.

An indicator of the enormity of the problem the household definition is causing can be found by examining Missouri's caseload statistics for AFDC and Food Stamps. In Missouri, the maximum AFDC grant for a family of three is $279 a month. This is less than 36% of the U.S. poverty line. These families are well below income and resource levels for Food Stamps and constitute the poorest of our children. However, in Missouri, over 18,300 of these cases (of over 55,000 people) do not receive Food Stamps. This is 29% of the AFDC caseload. When asked for an explanation, State Officials pointed to the "Household Definition." Our experience with cases like Nancy represents bear this out. Changing the household definition would help address both hunger and potential homelessness for a substantial number of our nation's children.

I want to share one last barrier to participation in public assistance programs experienced by homeless families with children. If a homeless family has no place to stay -- and this is not unusual, with shelters for homeless families in St. Louis maintaining waiting lists -- there is a fear that by identifying ones self to the State, the parent becomes at risk of losing their child. The shelter in St. Louis which serves the most families advises those they turn away not to apply for public assistance for this reason. I have worked with homeless families whose caseworkers have reported them to protective services because of concern for the welfare of the child. In Missouri, where there is no Emergency Assistance Program to help stabilize such a family, this can mean the removal of the children for placement in more expensive foster care. We need to assure that programs are in place so that homeless families do not put themselves in jeopardy when requesting services that could help them.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we are recommending:

* A COMPREHENSIVE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS
* A CHANGE IN THE HOUSEHOLD DEFINITION
* SERVICES TO INSURE FAMILY STABILITY DURING TIMES OF HOMELESSNESS

Thank you for this opportunity to share our experience. It is our hope that it will be useful to you as you shape policy that could ease access to assistance for this vulnerable group of Americans who find themselves homeless.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN E. BENKER, M.D., FORMER DIRECTOR, NEW YORK CITY

THERE IS ONE SIMPLE POINT THAT I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE TODAY: HOMELESSNESS AND HUNGER GO HAND-IN-HAND. WHEREVER WE FIND HOMELESS FAMILIES, WE FIND HUNGRY FAMILIES. BOTH HOMELESSNESS AND HUNGER PERMANENTLY DAMAGE THE HEALTH OF THESE FAMILIES. THIS DAMAGE TAKES PLACE DESPITE GOVERNMENT NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

MY NAME IS DR. KAREN BENKER.

THE FACTS I'LL BE GIVING YOU ON THE INSEPARABLE NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS, HUNGER, AND ILL HEALTH COME FROM THE TWO YEARS THAT I SPENT AS DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES IN THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. AND FROM MY CONTINUED INVESTIGATIONS SINCE LEAVING THAT POST LAST JULY. MY SPECIALITIES ARE FAMILY PRACTICE, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE. I'M A MEMBER OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECTION OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION.

FIRST LET ME SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE NUTRITION OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WHO ARE PLACED IN WELFARE HOTELS. REMEMBER THAT THESE USUALLY DECREPIT HOTELS WERE TYPICALLY FAILING COMMERCIALLY AND FOR THAT REASON AGREED TO ACCEPT HOMELESS FAMILIES. MANY OF THESE HOTELS HAD BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN DRUG DEALING AND PROSTITUTION, BOTH OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN. THE SECURITY IN THE BUILDINGS IS POOR, FREQUENTLY WITH OPEN ACCESS TO CRIMINAL ELEMENTS, WITH POOR LIGHTING, AND WITH BROKEN DOOR LOCKS.

TYPICALLY A FAMILY IS CROWDED INTO A SINGLE SMALL ROOM, OFTEN WITH BARELY ENOUGH SPACE TO WALK AROUND THE BEDS. COOKING IS ILLEGAL. BATHROOMS MAY BE SHARED IN THE HALLS. THE FAMILIES RELY ON INCOME MAINTENANCE FOR SUPPORT. EVEN IF A FAMILY MEMBER IS WORKING, THE ROOM RENTS ARE SO EXORBITANT---AS HIGH AS $100 A NIGHT---THAT THE FAMILY MUST ENROLL FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. CONSTRAINTS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON EMERGENCY HOUSING FORCE CITIES TO USE HOTELS LIKE THESE FOR TEMPORARY SHELTER.

WHEN WE SURVEYED FAMILIES IN ONE LARGE HOTEL ABOUT THEIR NUTRITION, THIS IS WHAT WE FOUND:

THE FAMILIES TENDED TO BE LARGER THAN THE CITY AVERAGE, APPARENTLY BECAUSE APARTMENTS FOR LARGE FAMILIES ARE EVEN SCARCER THAN FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION. OTHER STUDIES SHOW THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MINORITY OF THESE FAMILIES HAVE HAD TO PUT ONE OR MORE CHILDREN INTO FOSTER CARE TO SURVIVE.

OF THE 439 INDIVIDUALS IN THE SURVEY, 28% WERE AT SPECIAL NUTRITIONAL RISK: 22% BECAUSE THEY WERE LESS THAN 5 YEARS OLD, 3% BECAUSE THEY WERE ON SPECIAL DIETS PRESCRIBED BY PHYSICIANS (FOR EXAMPLE, FOR DIABETES), AND 3% BECAUSE THEY WERE PREGNANT.

EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY, 3 OUT OF 4 FAMILIES HAD A MEMBER WITH SPECIAL NUTRITIONAL NEEDS, INCLUDING 16% OF FAMILIES WITH A PREGNANT MEMBER. OTHER SURVEYS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT IN 10% OR MORE OF HOMELESS FAMILIES, SOMEONE IS PREGNANT, A FACT WITH DISTURBING CONSEQUENCES FOR THE HEALTH OF BOTH THE MOTHER AND THE UNBORN CHILD.

HOW WELL WERE THESE FAMILIES DOING NUTRITIONALLY? NOTE, FIRST, THAT PRICES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE HOTEL---MIDTOWN MANHATTAN---WERE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN USUAL. AND RESOURCES TO BUY FOOD WERE OFTEN SCARCE. FOR EXAMPLE, OVER ONE-THIRD OF THE FAMILIES REPORTED THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED FOOD STAMPS REGULARLY: AND PROBLEMS WITH OTHER ENTITLEMENTS WERE COMMON. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF FAMILIES HAD BEEN ROBBED OF THEIR MONEY, THEIR FOOD STAMPS, OR THEIR FOOD.

SIXTY-TWO PERCENT OF THE FAMILIES REPORTED THAT IN THE LAST SIX WEEKS THEY HAD RUN COMPLETELY OUT OF FOOD FOR THEIR FAMILIES FOR A DAY OR MORE. SIXTY-TWO PERCENT! THEY SURVIVED THESE FOOD CRISES BY BORROWING FROM OTHERS, BY DRINKING WATER, BY GOING HUNGRY, OR BY SEEKING EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES FROM WELFARE WORKERS.

MOST HAD TO SHOP DAILY FOR FOOD, ESPECIALLY FOR MILK, BECAUSE OF LACK OF REFRIGERATION AND OTHER ADEQUATE STORAGE SPACE. FOURTEEN PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN LIVED IN FAMILIES WHO HAD NO REFRIGERATION AND WHO BOUGHT MILK ONCE A WEEK OR LESS OFTEN. MILK LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK---HOW DO WE EXPECT THESE CHILDREN'S BONES TO DEVELOP PROPERLY?

AND WHATEVER FOOD THERE WAS, WAS BEING EATEN BY MORE THAN PEOPLE. NINETY-ONE PERCENT OF FAMILIES FOUND ROACHES IN THEIR STORED FOOD; 60% HAD HAD FOOD EATEN BY MICE; 10% BY RATS; AND 7% BY PIGEONS. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE WOMAN WITH SEVERAL TEENAGERS TOLD ME THAT SHE HAD BUDGETTED TO BUY TWO POUNDS OF HAMBURGER, WHICH SHE CAREFULLY STORED ON THE OUTSIDE WINDOW SILL, ONLY TO HAVE IT EATEN BY RODENTS. WANTING HER FAMILY TO GET ENOUGH PROTEIN, SHE SCRIMPED ENOUGH TO BUY A LARGE PLASTIC TUB OF PEANUT BUTTER, WHICH SHE STORED UNDER THE BED: BUT OVERNIGHT SOMETHING GNAWED THROUGH THE CONTAINER AND ATE WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A WEEK OF LUNCHES.

SINCE THAT SURVEY THERE HAS BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE PROVISION OF REFRIGERATION TO HOTEL FAMILIES. STILL, HOTEL LIFE REPRESENTS A STANDARD OF LIVING LOWER THAN WHAT OUR COUNTRY HAS TOLERATED FOR GENERATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, MOST FAMILIES COPED BY USING ILLEGAL HOT PLATES. FIRES ARE COMMON. SEVERAL YEARS AGO, A HOT PLATE IN THIS SAME HOTEL STARTED A MAJOR FIRE THAT PUT 16 PEOPLE IN THE HOSPITAL AND KILLED ONE CHILD.

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A WORD ABOUT THE CARE OF INFANTS IN THESE FAMILIES. WE HAVE A SMALL BABY AT HOME: AND I AM OFTEN REMINDED THAT TAKING CARE OF AN INFANT IS A SIMILAR SITUATION TO THAT OF THE MAN IN THE TELEVISION COMMERCIAL: IT'S ALWAYS, "TIME TO MAKE THE DONUTS!" TIME TO STERILIZE NIPPLES, BOIL WATER, PREPARE FORMULA, DISPOSE OF DIAPERS, DO LAUNDRY, FEED THE BABY, WASH THE BABY, STERILIZE NIPPLES, AND SO ON.

AND MOTHERS IN THE HOTELS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY CAN'T REALLY DO ALL THESE THINGS: THEY CAN'T AFFORD ENOUGH FORMULA, THEY CAN'T STORE THE FORMULA SAFELY ONCE IT'S OPEN, THEY CAN'T MAINTAIN THE HYGIENIC STANDARDS THEY WANT TO. AND THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY'RE SOMETIMES FORCED TO WATER DOWN THE FORMULA, TO GIVE IT WITHOUT STERILIZING THE NIPPLES, TO SUBSTITUTE CEREAL AND WATER OR EVEN SUGARED WATER TO FILL THE BABY UP.

NOTE, TOO, THAT TWO OUT OF THREE FAMILIES HAD AT LEAST ONE MEMBER THAT WAS ELIGIBLE FOR THE WIC PROGRAM, THE SPECIAL NUTRTIONAL PROGRAM FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, NEWLY DELIVERED MOTHERS, AND CHILDREN LESS THAN 5 YEARS OLD. THE WIC PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD, NUTRITION EDUCATION, AND HEALTH MONITORING TO NEEDY FAMILIES.

BUT PARTICIPATING IN WIC IS HARD FOR THESE FAMILIES: THEY'RE OFTEN TOO BUSY ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS TO TRAVEL TO A DISTANT PROGRAM. THEY'VE OFTEN LOST ALL THEIR DOCUMENTS IN THE FREQUENT MOVING FROM PLACE TO PLACE THAT IS PART OF HOMELESSNESS. IT'S HARD FOR THEM TO KEEP UP WITH THE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO WIC. THE FOOD PACKAGE ITSELF IS ILL-SUITED TO HOTEL LIFE: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH 9 QUARTS OF MILK AND 18 EGGS IF YOU DON'T HAVE A REFRIGERATOR? AND THERE AREN'T MANY STORES NEARBY THAT ACCEPT WIC VOUCHERS.

LOOKING AT THE WHOLE PICUTRE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE HOTELS, THEN, IT ISN'T SURPRISING---IT'S TRAGIC, BUT IT ISN'T SURPRISING---THAT TWICE AS MANY BABIES ARE BORN UNDERWEIGHT (THAT IS, LESS THAN 2.5 KILOGRAMS) THAN IN THE CITY AS A WHOLE. NOR IS IT SURPRISING THAT INFANTS BORN TO MOTHERS LIVING IN THE HOTELS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO DIE BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY AS OTHER INFANTS IN THE CITY. THEIR INFANT MORTALITY RATE (DEATHS PER ONE THOUSAND BIRTHS) OF 25 PER THOUSAND IS ALARMING. THESE NUMBERS ALSO IMPLY THAT MANY INFANTS WHO DON'T DIE, SURVIVE WITH LUNG INJURIES, CEREBRAL PALSY, OR OTHER BRAIN DAMAGE AS A RESULT OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT.

RECENTLY A SMALL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT HAS BEEN STARTED IN NYC TO TRY TO ADAPT THE WIC PROGRAM FOR SOME HOTEL FAMILIES. HOPEFULLY THIS PROGRAM WILL HAVE SOME IMPACT AND WILL BE EXPANDED. BUT EVEN THEN, THE WHOLE WEIGHT OF HOTEL LIFE DRAGS AGAINST THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF THESE CHILDREN.

YET HOMELESS FAMILIES WHO DON'T LIVE IN THE HOTESL HAVE AN EVEN MORE MISERABLE EXISTENCE. HOUNDREDS OF FAMILIES ARE PACKED INTO SO-CALLED CONGREGATE OR MASS SHELTERS WITH NO PRIVACY AND LITTLE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES. FAMILIES SLEEP IN COTS SIDE BY SIDE WITH MANY STRANGERS. THE SHARED TOILET FACILITIES AND THE CROWDING TOGETHER OF MANY CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT YET TOILET-TRAINED ARE THE IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR THE SPREAD OF DIARRHEAL DISEASE. AND IN FACT UNCONTROLLABLE OUTBREAKS OF DIARRHEA ARE A FACT OF LIFE IN THE FAMILY CONGREGATE SHELTERS. THIS CHRONIC, RECURRENT DIARRHEA UNDERMINDS THE NUTRITION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AND HAS GRIM IMPLICATIONS. THE RECENT DEATH FROM DIARRHEA OF AN INFANT IN A CONGREGATE CHILDREN'S SHELTER IS EVIDENCE THAT THE STANDARD OF LIFE IN THESE SETTINGS APPROACHES THAT IN SO-CALLED UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

AND YET, HOMELESS FAMILIES WHO DO NOT HAVE SHELTER HAVE AN EVEN LOWER STANDARD OF LIVING. IN WORK THAT IS NOW BEING DONE BY DR. ANNA LOU DEHAVENON FOR RELEASE IN THE COMING MONTH, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MANY THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES WHO ARE TRYING TO ENTER THE LIMITED SHELTER SYSTEM ARE SUFFERING BADLY.

VIRTUALLY ALL THE MEN IN THESE FAMILIES REPORT MARKED

WEIGHT LOSS IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS AS THEY WALK ALL AROUND THE CITY TRYING TO EARN MONEY OR FIND SHELTER FOR THEIR FAMILIES FOR THE NIGHT. THE LITTLE FOOD AVAILABLE IS SAVED FOR THE WOMEN AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE CHILDREN.

I PERSONALLY HAVE MET FATHERS APPLYING FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER WHOSE CLOTHES HUNG ON THEIR BODIES, WHOSE BELTS HAD BEEN TAKEN IN THREE AND FOUR NOTCHES. ONE FATHER WALKED OVER TEN MILES EACH DAY TO GO TO HIS WORKFARE JOB AND SKIPPED LUNCH SO THAT HIS INFANT DAUGHTER COULD HAVE FORMULA.

EVEN MORE DISTURBING ARE THE REPORTS FROM PREGNANT WOMEN IN THIS SITUATION, WHO SAY---AND LOOK AS IF---THEY HAVE GAINED NO WEIGHT EVEN BY THEIR SIXTH AND SEVENTH MONTH. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR UNBORN CHILDREN ARE GRIM.

CLEARLY THESE CRISES IN THE NUTRITIONAL LIFE OF HOMELESS FAMILIES, WHETHER STAYING IN HOTELS, IN CONGREGATE SHELTERS, OR IN THE STREETS, CANNOT BE MET BY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS ALONE, SUCH AS WIC, SCHOOL LUNCHES, AND SURPLUS FOOD DISTRIBUTION.

WHAT A SCANDAL THAT OUR COUNTRY PRODUCES A SUPERABUNDANCE OF FOOD AND YET WE LET UNTOLD HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS BE HURT BY MALNUTRTION.

AND CLEARLY, THE TEMPORARY SHELTER SYSTEM IS NOT AN ANSWER. THE SITUATION REMINDS ME OF A TIME WHEN MY OLD CAR DIDN'TRUN RELIABLY ANYMORE. I COULDN'T GET TO WORK ON TIME. THE CAR BROKE DOWN WHEN I WENT TO PICK UP MY CHILDREN FROM THEIR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS. IT WASN'T RELIABLE WHEN I HAD TO GO GROCERY SHOPPPING OR VISIT THE LAUNDROMAT.

THE GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE GIVEN ME A RIDE TO AND FROM WORK. IT COULD HAVE HIRED SOMEONE TO PICK UP MY CHILDREN. IT COULD HAVE HAD A MECHANIC COME ONCE A WEEK TO TINKER AND SIGH OVER THE CAR'S ENGINE. AND IT COULD HAVE SENT A PSYCHOTHERAPIST ONCE A WEEK TO GIVE US FAMILY THERAPY BECAUSE THE WHOLE SITUATION WAS DRIVING US CRAZY. BUT IT DIDN'T HAVE TO.

ALL THAT NEEDED TO BE DONE WAS FOR THE OLD CAR TO BE JUNKED AND FOR ME TO BUY A RELIABLE CAR. AND I WAS ABLE TO DO THAT BECAUSE I HAD A JOB.

A SET OF INSITUTIONS ARE DEVELOPING AROUND THE HOMELESS IN THIS COUNTRY TO PROVIDE SERVICES. BUT THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT HELPLESS, THEY'RE HOMELESS. THEY NEED THE SAME THINGS ALL OF US NEED AND MANY OF US HAVE: AFFORDABLE PERMANENT HOUSING AND JOBS AT DECENT PAY. THEN THEIR PROBLEMS OF HUNGER AND ILLHEALTH WILL RESOLVE THEMSELVES. WITHOUT THESE THINGS THEIR HEALTH WILL BECOME STEADILY WORSE. LET'S JUNK THE THINGS THAT DON'T WORK AND USE THE THINGS THAT WILL.

THANK YOU.

NYC DEPT. OF HEALTH
FAMILY SHELTER HEALTH PROGRAM Sept. 84

NUTRITIONAL PATTERNS IN FAMILIES IN A WELFARE HOTEL

Summary

The Family Shelter Health Program sought descriptive data on families living in welfare hotels to guide the development of the program activities. One-fourth (88) of the families at the largest hotel were interviewed; they reported a marked diversity in their ability to cope and adapt to life in the hotel. In addition 24-hour dietary recalls were assessed on 39 of these individuals in 26 families; and these results are reported separately. A substantial number of high-risk people were identified in nutritional subgroups. The findings show the need for the program to have components on budgetting; nutrition in pregnancy and childhood; pest control; food stroage; supplemental food programs like WIC and school lunches; and liaison with HRA. In addition the data suggest the advisability of the City's uniformly providing refrigerators to families in hotels and the advisability of broadening WIC eligibility and capacity to include all families in hotels.

Introduction

Data were needed to provide background information for public health work. The largest hotel was chosen for convenience; it poses for families typical difficulties of life in welfare hotels. Located in a commercial district, it is a labyrinthine structure in moderate disrepair with poor elevator service, fair sanitation, and no formal cooking or refrigeration facilities.

Two-member teams of public health workers (nutritionists, public health nurses, physicians, epidemiologists, and others went door-to-door over a two-day period (August 14th and 15th, 1984) and asked hotel residents to answer a standard questionnaire in English or Spanish (attached). Eighty-eight families containing 439 individuals were interviewed, about one-fourth of the hotel families. A subset of 39 individuals in 26 families were included in an analysis of a 24-hour dietary recall that is reported separately. Before the survey, the Mother's Club---a discussion group among families in the hotel that had been initiated by the on-site nurse---had reviewed the aims and content of the questionnaire and had endorsed the effort. Families had received the letters asking for their cooperation (attached). In general, the families responded warmly; only two outright refusals were reported. Comparison with official HRA data on the families in the hotel according to ethnicity, length of stay, and family size indicates that the at-home sample was representative of all families in the hotel.

Findings

Overall the findings showed marked diversity in adaptation to hotel life. At one extreme, a family had rebuilt the interior of their hotel room with shelves, cabinents, a microwave, and a refrigerator-freezer. At the other extreme, a battered woman

Nutrition survey (con't)

with four children sat in a barren room and passed around a bag of sugar with a spoon; the one time the mother had left the hotel to try to obtain more food or money, she spotted her husband outside and returned empty-handed. The importance of high-risk subgroups within the total hotel population is clear.

Family Composition

Eighty-eight families with 439 members responded to the questionnaire.* Seven of 88 (8%) preferred to be interviewed in Spanish. Overall, the families tended to be large and to contain individuals at high-risk nutritionally.

The average number of children (defined as a person 18 years old or younger) per family was 3.6. Fully 30% of the children lived in families that had six or more children (up to 9). Another 33% lived in families with 4 or 5 children.

A majority of families (66%) contained only one adult (a person 19 years old or older), but a significant number had two adults. One family had six adults and five children. (Relationships among adults were not asked about in the survey, although families volunteered the information that other adults were spouses, friends, or members of the extended family.)

The adults (19 and older) were primarily young; their median age was 30. A significant number of older people were present, as shown by the age distribution in Table I, with the eldest 80 years old. A substantial number of individuals at nutritional risk live in these families. As Table II shows, 28% of individuals are either pregnant (3%), less than 5 years old (22%), or on a special diet prescribed by a physician (3%), usually for a chronic condition like diabetes. At least one such individual at special nutritional risk occurs in 75% of the families, as shown in Table III.

Shopping Practices

Most (87%) of the families report shopping for food almost every day, especially for milk (74%). Practices varied widely, however. For example, 16% buy milk once a week or less often. For meat, 42% report buying it "almost every day", while 21% report buying it "almost never". While 19% report buying eggs "almost every day", another 19% report buying eggs "almost never".

Although 22% travel by subway to distant places (including out-of-state) to shop, most walked to stores near the hotel. Groceries were purchased from a variety of types of

*Because not every family answered every question, the denominator in the percentage calculations changes slightly in the findings.

Nutrition survey (con't)

stores. Families reported these buying practices in the two weeks prior to the survey:

80% had shopped in a supermarket;
70% had shopped in a small grocery;
59% had shopped at a fruit-and-vegetable stand;
39% had shopped in a meat market;
25% had shopped in a fish market.

Money for food was not always available. Families reported that since moving into the hotel, a period ranging from 1 day to nearly 4 years, 34% had not received Food Stamps regularly; 13% had not received restaurant allowances regularly. Further, some families reported that since moving to the hotel, they had been robbed of their money (20%), of their Food Stamps (9%), or of their food (10%).

Families noted that stores near the hotel charged high prices. The median price quoted by the families for a quart of milk was 89¢ and for a slice of pizza $1 or more. Some (11%) had not found a store in the vicinity that accepts Food Stamps. Only 5% had found a store nearby that extends credit.

Although officially the families are provided with restaurant allowances since the hotels do not have cooking facilities, most families rely on buying groceries and preparing most of their own meals. A substantial number (37%) had bought no food from any type of restaurant or fast-food shop (e.g., McDonald's or a pizzeria) in the previous two weeks. Of those who did buy meals out, relatively few (13% of all families) bought the meals as often as every other day. Although there are food pantries and soup kitchens within walking distance, only 9% of the families reported receiving any free groceries from churches or food pantries in the previous two weeks; and only 15% reported receiving free meals from churches or soup kitchens in the previous weeks. Some families had an easier time because members received at least some of their meals at a day care center (24% of families), at a Summer Meals program (18%), or from a family or friend (31%).

WIC Enrollment

Another possible source of food-money for these families is WIC. Many people in the hotel are potentially eligible. Sixty-seven percent of the families had at least one member who was pregnant, was up to 6 months postpartum*, or was under the age of five years; 27% of the population sampled met these criteria. These data are summarized in Table IV. Of these potential WIC clients, only 35% of the families were currently enrolled (33% of eligible individuals).

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*Data on lactation were not sought.

Nutriton survey (con't)

The survey did not gather reliable information on the sites of WIC enrollment, although sources in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan were noted. Of those actually enrolled, 15% had not found a store in the vicinity of the hotel that accepts WIC vouchers.

Families that were not enrolled cited a variety of reasons: lack of knowledge about the program; difficulty in travelling back and forth to maintain eligibility, difficulties in transferring their cases since moving to the hotel; problems establishing eligibility (including being "too healthy"); and lack of time to apply because of the demands of hotel life.

Refrigeration, Storage, Preparation and Eating

An important subgroup (29%) of the families do have refrigeration at this hotel, either their own refrigertor in the room (21%) or access to someone else's (8%) so that budgetting of time and money is easier. (The potential for electrical fires from refrigeration is unclear.) Families without refrigeration reported a variety of practices to keep foods cold: keeping food under running water in the bathtub; buying small quantities of ice to chill food in a bowl, in a cooler, in the sink, or in the toilet tank.

The lack of refrigeration probably has a harmful effect on the nutritional health of some families. For example, 14% of the children lived in families without refrigeration who bought milk once a week or less often*; 8% of the children lived in families without refrigeration who bought milk less often than once a week and had no other potential sources of supplemention noted (for example, meals from a day care center or a soup kitchen). These children with apparently inadequate milk intake occurred in all age groups from infancy to late adolescence.** Several mothers explicitly said that since moving to the hotel they had stopped buying milk for their children because it spoils so quickly. Presumably, during the school year, the intake of milk improves through participation in school lunch or breakfast programs.

Families at greater nutrtional risk do not seem to be more likely to have refrigeration. For example, refrigeration was not more common among potential WIC families than among families of presumably less critical nutritional need. Similarly while 71% of families do not have access to refrigeration, 67% of families with children less than 2 years old do not have access to refrigeration. Of those families with members on physician-prescribed diets, 6 of 10 had refrigeration, while 4 did not; yet without refrigeration diets for diabetes, hyper-

*Families reported anecdotally that in summer milk spoils in the hotel in less than a day.

**The 24-hour dietary recalls also showed poor diary intake.

Nutrition survey (con't)

tension and renal failure (diagnoses cited in the survey) are difficult to follow.

Food not requiring refrigeration is apparently also difficult to store in the hotel room because of lack of space and the presence of pests. Families commonly suspend their food from the wall in plastic milk crates. Families often reported pest infestation of their food since arriving at the hotel, as shown in Table V.

The difficulties of preparing food in the small rooms are highlighted by the following findings: the most common place (55%) used to cut up and prepare food was the bureau-top; and the usual place to wash food was the bathroom sink (90%) or the bathtub(10%).

The majority of families (75%) had some way of cooking in the rooms, usually by using a hot plate (68%). Some use electric skillets (22%), roaster ovens (21%), or other methods like crock pots. The potential of fire from these forms of illicit cooking is highlighted by the 1980 fire in the Martinique that started from a hot plate: one person died and another 16 were hospitalized. The families surveyed noted the importance of keeping a close eye on the hot plate when in use; of keeping children away from it; of placing it away from flammable materials; and of unplugging, cooling, and storing it safely after use.

Most families (79%) had no table at which they could sit down together and eat.

The difficulties of budgetting, shopping and preparing meals while living in a hotel are reflected in the fact that 59% of the families reported that they found it better not to serve regular meals, but to feed their children whenever they become hungry.

On a more disturbing note, 62% (51 of 84 responding) of families reported that in the last six weeks they had run completely out of food for their families for a day or more. When only families who lived in this hotel for the entire six-week period are considered (since new families were more likely to go hungry during the preceding period of homelessness), still 57% (42 of 74) of families reported being without food for a day or more. Families reported that they managed during these food crises by borrowing food or money from neighbors or family, by getting emergency food supplies for the CIS office; by drinking water; or by going hungry. The experience of running out of food was only slightly less common (54%) among potential WIC families, again suggesting that high-risk groups are vulnerable. Note, however, the partial ambiguity of the question as asked: "Since the end of June---when school got out---have you run completely out of food for your family for a day or more?" Some respondents may have answered about episodes of an

Nutritional survey (con't)

"empty pantry" when they simply ate elsewhere. Clearly, however, many families have an irregular and unreliable food supply.

Discussion

Virtually the entire population of homeless families in welfare hotels is comprised of women of child-bearing age and growing children, that is, of a group with particular nutritional needs. Among these families, the subgroups at higher nutritional risk are:

pregnant women and lactating women:
infants and children up to age 5; and
chronically ill individuals on physician-prescribed diets.

A majority of hotel families contain someone in one of these high-risk groups. Families coping poorly are at special risk.

The degree of nutritional risk is heightened by lack of refrigeration; again, a majority of families fall in this category. Another factor that heightens risk is an irregular food supply, either from an irregular income, loss from theft or pest infestation, or from poor budgetting.

The appropriate activities that the on-site nurses of the Family Shelter Health Program can undertake to reduce these risks are:

teaching or arranging teaching on nutritional, budgetting, pest control, and food storage;
emphasizing referrals to special feeding programs, especially WIC and school nutritional programs; and
establishing effective liaison with on-site HRA personnel to guarantee a regular income to hotel families.

In addition, the data strongly suggest that refrigeration should be uniformly provided to families in welfare hotels. Before such a recommendation can be made, the Health Department may wish to discuss with the Buildings Department whether the electrical wiring at each currently used hotel is adequate to handle this additional proposed load.

In addition, the data strongly suggest that the disruption of homelessness makes participation in WIC difficult. Because of the concern with the nutritional needs of homeless families at both the City and State level, it seems reasonable to initiate discussions on registering families in WIC at the hotels and on extending WIC eligibility across-the-board to all homeless families.

Nutritional survey (con't)

TABLE I: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS IN FAMILIES SAMPLED

Years of Age	n	%
0-4	98	22%
5-9	100	23
10-14	72	16
15-19	56	13
20-24	26	6
25-29	24	5
30-34	24	5
35-39	14	3
...	...	...
40-49	14	3
50-59	4	1
60+	3	1
Unknown	4	1
Total	439	99%*

*rounding error

TABLE II: INDIVIDUALS AT SPECIAL NUTRITIONAL RISK

	n	%
Individuals at special nutritional risk*		
Pregnant 14		
Under 5 98		
On MD-rx'd diet 11		
	123	28%
Individuals at usual risk	316	72
Total	439	100%

*data on lactation not sought

TABLE III: DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS AT SPECIAL NUTRTIONAL RISK BY FAMILIES

Number of family members at special nutritonal risk	Number of families	% of all families
0	22	25%
1	30	34
2	24	27
3 or more*	12	14
Total	88	100%

*8 families with 3 members,
3 with 4 members, 1 with 5

Nutritional survey (con't)

TABLE IV: POTENTIAL WIC ELIGIBILITY*

		n	%
A. BY INDIVIDUALS			
Potentially eligible			
Pregnant	14		
6 mos. postpartum	5		
Under 1 year of age	10		
1 to 4 years old	88		
		117	27%
Not potentially eligible		322	73
Total		439	100%
B. BY FAMILIES			
With potentially eligible members		59	67%
Without potentially eligible members		29	33
		88	100%

*Data on lactation not sought

TABLE V: REPORTED INCIDENCE OF PEST INFESTATION IN FOOD

	yes	no
Roaches	91%	9%
Other insects, e.g. flies	63	27
Mice	60	40
Rats	10	90
Pigeons	7	93

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HELEN HERSHKOFF, LAWYER, THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY, NEW YORK, N.Y.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for inviting me to testify today on behalf of the hungry and the homeless of New York State.

My name is Helen Hershkoff. I am a member of the Adjunct Faculties of the Columbia University School of Social Work and CUNY Law School at Queens College. But mostly, I am a lawyer at The Legal Aid Society of New York.

The Legal Aid Society is a private, non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of New York for the purpose of rendering legal representation and assistance without cost to persons in New York City who are without adequate means to employ other counsel. It may be the oldest organization of its kind in the United States.

As a lawyer working jointly in the Society's Civil Appeals and Law Reform Unit and Homeless Family Rights Project, I represent poor people, in courts and in agencies, under law, to keep poor people fed, to keep poor people housed, and to keep poor people alive with a sense of hope and dignity.

For our clients, the federal Food Stamp Program could be a lifeline to a decent diet, and so salvation from the terrible effects of hunger and malnutrition. But New York's poor apparently are not getting food stamps that they need and deserve. Over the last few

years, we of New York have witnessed a staggering increase in the number of poor and homeless people suffering food emergencies -- not having cash or food stamps to buy food. New York City alone has 10,000 homeless adults and 5000 homeless families with children living temporarily in barracks-style shelters and welfare hotels. Countless thousands live on park benches, in subway stations, and on the street. At the same time, increasing numbers of poor people ask for food at soup kitchens and food pantries, while we witness a steady decrease in the number of poor people getting food stamps.

Why is this happening? Why do so many poor people fall through the safety net? Why do so many homeless children wait on line on cold nights to get food at a soup kitchen? The sad fact -- which you alone can change -- is that the Food Stamp Act imposes insurmountable barriers that prevent poor people, especially homeless people, from getting the food stamps that they desperately need and to which they are entitled.

What are these barriers to participation in the Food Stamp Program?

First, we have the barrier of information. Knowledge is power, and you cannot get food stamps unless you know where and how to apply. A number of different factors -- pride, intimidation, no money for transportation -- help to explain why thousands of poor New Yorkers, poor enough to qualify for food stamps, do not get them. But recent studies all point to lack of information as the most important reason for low participation rates. See, e.g., Physician Task Force on Hunger in America, Increasing Hunger and Declining Help: Barriers to Participation in the Food Stamp Program, Harvard School of Public Health (May 1986), at 60-70; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Why 10 Million Low Income Americans Do Not Receive Food Stamps: A Review of the Research Literature (September 1984).

We, in New York, know for sure that lack of information about the Food Stamp Program keeps many eligible New Yorkers from getting assistance.

New York City recently surveyed the men and women who eat at soup kitchens and use food pantries. See New York City Human Resources Administration Office of Program Evaluation, Characteristics and Use of Conventional Benefits by Users of Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries (October 1986). Some of those surveyed

were women with children. The survey graphically demonstrates that lack of information keeps poor people from getting food stamps.

A full one-third of those surveyed had never even applied for food stamps because they had been told or believed that they were ineligible. Another 10 percent had never applied for food stamps because they did not know how. Another 10 percent generally stated that lack of knowledge kept them from applying for food stamps. Among the disabled who receive Supplemental Security Income -- persons undoubtedly eligible for food stamps -- 40 percent of those surveyed did not receive benefits. Instead, these poor people begged for change or waited on long lines at soup kitchens and food pantries in order to get food to eat. The survey concludes: "... about 14 percent of public assistance recipients and 43 percent of SSI beneficiaries may represent target populations for food stamp outreach efforts, since they report not using Food Stamps, but are presumably eligible."

The problem, however, is that at least since 1981, the Food Stamp Act has forbidden New York State -- and all states -- from using federal money for "outreach" that would educate poor people about their right to food stamps.

What can we do? Immediately abolish the prohibition on federal dollars for outreach. Fund the states to educate poor people about their right to food stamps. Bring food stamps to the people -- have a poster campaign to tell people where and how to apply for this critical benefit. Reenforce community ties by funding community groups to spread the word about the food stamp program.

Second, we have the barrier of verification. Even if a needy person knows how to apply for food stamps, only the most stalwart can actually get through the complicated bureaucratic maze that leads them to assistance. The uneducated, the unhealthy, the uninformed, and the unhoused find it difficult to unlock what has been called a "papergate" that keeps tens of thousands of needy New Yorkers outside the Food Stamp Program.

Frances M., a client, is a fifty-four-year-old woman who shares an apartment in New York City. She applied for food stamps. She gave the agency a letter from the prime tenant to prove her residence. She gave the agency her clinic card and her library card to prove her identity. The agency wanted a birth certificate. Frances M. did not

have a birth certificate. She asked the Department of Health for a copy. All the while Frances M. was hungry. The agency made no telephone calls and wrote no letters on her behalf. Instead, the agency denied Frances M.'s application because the birth certificate never arrived.

Mark B., another client, lives on the street. His wallet was stolen one day at the Port Authority. He applied for food stamps. Mark no longer had a Social Security card, but he knew the number and gave the number to the agency. He asked the agency to help him get documents. The agency gave Mark no help. Instead, it denied his application.

Frances M. and Mark B. are not isolated examples. Thousands of poor people, especially homeless people, do not get food stamps because they do not have an I.D. or cannot meet the Act's verification requirements. A family burned out of a building does not have a file cabinet of documents. A disabled person living on the street cannot make repeated visits to agencies to secure written documents to prove his need.

Onerous verification requirements prevent homeless people from having their food stamp applications accepted. These requirements also cause households that become homeless to lose food stamps, even after the household has been certified as eligible to participate in the program. Indeed, many homeless families suffer prolonged periods of food emergencies because their cases have been "closed" due to an inability to satisfy complicated procedural requirements.

Food stamps stop when a homeless family fails to respond to a request for verification mailed to an address at which the family no longer lives. Food stamps stop when a homeless family finds itself bounced from welfare hotel to welfare hotel.

Studies by the East Harlem Interfaith Welfare Committee show that at least 20 percent of the surveyed families found themselves without money and without food stamps because their cases had been closed, for reasons including failure by the agency to record a new address, non-receipt of an appointment letter, or late receipt of an appointment letter. In most of these cases, an eligible household had to wait weeks for a new application to be processed and for food stamps to be issued. In the meantime, the family had no food. See East Harlem Interfaith Welfare Committee, The Tyranny of Indifference and the Myth of a Caring Society: A Study of 669 Households with Children in Food Emergencies in East Harlem in 1982.

What can we do? Simplify the application process. Shorten the form. Reduce the number of interviews. Monitor the states to ensure that they provide trained workers at income maintenance centers and at shelters to assist applicants to complete the forms and to get benefits. Monitor the states to ensure that they make collateral contacts to obtain oral verification when a homeless applicant cannot provide written proof of need. When states do not assist the applicant, sanction the state, and sanction the state again when it denies benefits to an eligible person who does not have the "right" piece of paper in her shopping bag. Use Quality Control to ensure that every eligible person receives food stamps by sanctioning the states for underissuances, for failing to issue food stamps to eligible applicants, and for failing to restore food stamps to applicants who were wrongfully denied benefits.

Third, we have the barrier of the "household rule." The Food Stamp Act prevents children from claiming separate household status from their parents when they reside together, even if they do not purchase and prepare food together. By contrast, the Act allows all other persons who live together to present proof of their domestic arrangements in order to establish separate household status.

Many of these "children" are in fact grown-up with their own children, but because they cannot find adequate, affordable housing have been forced to "double-up" with a relative rather than live on the street or in a shelter. New York City has an estimated 230,000 doubled-up families. According to the New York City Housing Authority, 35,000 households -- 20 percent of the entire public housing population -- live "doubled-up."

Delores B., another client, was one of these invisible homeless. Living in the Bronx with her three children, Delores found it necessary to move into her mother's three-room apartment. The Housing Authority had a waiting list of 175,000 households. Delores' mother worked, but did not earn enough to support her daughter or feed her grandchildren. The household rule required that Delores include her mother in her food stamp budget. It seemed, on paper at least, that Delores had some money. Delores' food stamps stopped. So did her children's. The children became hungry. Relations in the apartment became strained. Delores and her three children moved out of the apartment and entered a welfare hotel in Queens. The room was squalid, the hotel was sordid. The children could no longer go to

school in the Bronx and their young lives were disrupted and rootless. At last count, the children were being placed into foster care.

What can we do? Use the Food Stamp Act to fortify the family relations of the homeless and poor, not to destroy them. Amend the Food Stamp Act to allow parents and children and siblings who reside together but do not share food expenses to establish separate household status. If a relative is not under a legal obligation to provide support, do not assume that his income is available to feed relatives with whom he happens to live. Do not penalize a relative who offers a roof and a bed to a relative who might otherwise be homeless -- and be compelled to enter a welfare hotel at a daily cost of about $100 per day to New York City.

Finally, we have the barrier of the "excess" shelter deduction that forces a poor household to choose between rent and food. The Food Stamp Act assumes that an eligible household can spend at least 30 percent of its countable income on food, so that food stamp allotments decrease 30 cents for every dollar of countable income. But in New York City, high grocery prices mean that a family must spend far more than 30 percent of available income on food.

According to the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, the average weekly food costs of a New York City family of four was $119.94 in December 1986, or $479.76 per month. Similarly, the Community Food Resource Center conducted a market basket survey to determine the actual cost of the Thrifty Food Plan to New York City residents. The Center found that a shopper must spend an average of 40 percent more than the cost level of the Thrifty Food Plan to purchase its component food items.

But a family of four in New York receives a monthly "pre-added allowance" -- that part of a public assistance grant intended for food, transportation, clothing, and all other personal incidentals, exclusive of shelter -- of only $326.70. Add food stamps of about 70 cents per meal, and a family can buy sufficient groceries only if it spends far more than 30 percent of available income on food. The problem, of course, is that poor families do not have additional money to divert to food. Money becomes available only by foregoing other essential goods and services.

The absence of low-income housing -- and practically speaking, low-income housing does not exist in New York City -- exacerbates the problem. A family of four that is eligible for public assistance

receives a maximum grant of $270 to pay rent, even if actual rent is higher. More than half of the public assistance population pays rent that is higher than their allowance for shelter.

Indeed, according to the New York City Human Resources Administration, as of June 1985, almost 40 percent of public assistance recipients living in private housing paid lease rent of up to $29 more than the shelter allowance. Another 10 percent paid rent of up to $39 more. Another 16 percent paid rent of up to $59 more. Another 9 percent paid rent of up to $79 more. See New York City Human Resources Administration Office of Policy and Economic Research, Dependency: Economic and Social Data for New York City (June 1985), Table No. 24.

So, a poor family in New York can buy groceries only if it takes money away from other essentials, and the family can pay the rent -- and avoid eviction and homelessness -- only if it takes money away from food and pays it to the landlord. Worse still, the Food Stamp Act does not allow the household to deduct the full amount of its shelter costs from income. Rather, the Act caps the deduction for rent far below market cost. As a result, the household has far less than -- indeed nothing remotely close to -- 30 percent of income for food.

What can we do? Immediately uncap the excess shelter deduction. When shelter costs are more than 50 percent of countable income, the Food Stamp Act permits the elderly and disabled to deduct, dollar-for-dollar, all "excess" shelter costs. Why deny this deduction to a young child? The social costs of hunger and malnutrition among children are enormous. Inadequate nutrition correlates positively with low-birth weight, cognitive deficiency, and delayed or stunted growth. Hunger leaves children empty and restless, swollen and fearful. They cannot learn and they cannot develop to their full potential. Hunger among pregnant women leads to low-birth weight babies and low-birth weight is the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. Indeed, the United States can sadly claim the highest infant mortality rate among twenty industrialized nations. Why condemn a generation of poor children to hunger -- when the Food Stamp Program could be the most effective health dollar provided by the federal government to poor people?

Indeed, we can do more than merely uncap the excess shelter deduction. We can allow food stamp households a straightforward, dollar-for-dollar deduction of all payments made for shelter. A rent grant simply does not buy food. Moneys paid to a landlord cannot be

spent at the grocery store. No mother should be forced to tell a hungry child that food will be on the table only if the table is out on the street.

But there is more, and the need has never before been so urgent, the stakes so high. We can amend the Food Stamp Act to reflect the reality of food costs: that poor people do not have 30 percent of their countable income to spend for food, and that groceries cost more than 30 percent of a poor person's countable income. A poor person does not buy food with precision or sophistication. A poor person without a refrigerator cannot buy perishable food in bulk. Amend the Act so that food stamp allotments decrease only 15 cents for every dollar of countable income. A generation of Americans, saved from hunger, will thank you.

And I thank you, again, for this opportunity to testify before the Committee today.

CHARACTERISTICS AND USE OF CONVENTIONAL BENEFITS BY USERS OF SOUP KITCHENS AND FOOD PANTRIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY	1
I. BACKGROUND	1
II. METHOD	1
III. FINDINGS	2
A. Characteristics of Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Users	2
B. Differences Between Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Users	3
C. Income Sources and Housing Status of Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Users	5
D. Previous Contact With Public Assistance	9
E. Reasons for Non-Use of Public Assistance and Food Stamps	11
IV. CONCLUSIONS	11
APPENDIX	13

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1:	PERCENT OF SOUP KITCHEN AND FOOD PANTRY SAMPLES BY AGE, SEX AND ETHNIC GROUP.....	2
Figure 2:	CHARACTERISTICS DIFFERENTIATING SOUP KITCHEN FROM FOOD PANTRY USERS.....	4
Figure 3:	CHARACTERISTICS PREDICTING FOOD STAMP UTILIZATION.....	7
Figure 4:	PERCENT OF SOUP KITCHEN AND FOOD PANTRY SAMPLES BY INCOME SOURCE AND HOUSING TYPE.....	8
Figure 5:	PERCENT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CONTACT GROUPS BY SELECTED INCOME SOURCES FOR NON-PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS.....	9

LIST OF TABLES
Appendix

Table 1:	NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY INCOME SOURCES.....	13
Table 2:	NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SAMPLE BY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS AND REASONS FOR NON-RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.....	14
Table 3:	NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SAMPLE BY FOOD STAMP AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS AND REASONS FOR NON-RECEIPT OF FOOD STAMPS.....	15
Table 4:	SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS.....	16

SUMMARY

Despite the existence of conventional benefit programs such as public assistance and Food Stamps, soup kitchens and food pantries are providing free food at locations throughout New York City. This study was undertaken to determine whether soup kitchens and food pantries are primarily providing a supplemental benefit to persons enrolled in conventional benefit programs or whether they are largely serving persons who are not receiving conventional benefits. The study also examined the characteristics of soup kitchen and food pantry users, particularly those characteristics that differentiate users of the two types of facilities.

Interviews with a sample of 296 soup kitchen and 147 food pantry users in April 1985 in New York City indicated that both types of facilities serve participants in conventional benefit programs, persons with miscellaneous other sources of income, and persons receiving neither benefits nor income. The sample includes twice as many participants in conventional benefit programs as persons reporting no income at all. (The remainder--about one-fourth of the sample--report miscellaneous income from wages, odd jobs, unemployment compensation, and contributions from friends and relatives.) Among recipients of public assistance, 85 percent also make use of Food Stamps. Recipients of other conventional benefits, however, have much lower rates of Food Stamp use: 52 percent for Supplementary Security Income and 19 percent for Social Security.

Likewise, both types of facilities serve users from a variety of housing situations, ranging from those living in their own houses or apartments to the homeless. Nonetheless, the fact that soup kitchens serve prepared meals on the premises while food pantries distribute unprepared food results in different user profiles for the two types of facilities. The picture of pantry users is

one of greater "stability" than that of kitchen users. Pantry users are older, have more stable sources of income and are more likely to live in their own apartment or house. Kitchen users are younger and overwhelmingly male; many more of them have neither stable housing nor income sources.

The City of New York funds, operates and otherwise assists a number of conventional benefit programs which provide the indigent, incapacitated, and infirm with money for food and other necessities. In addition to these efforts, government and non-profit agencies use public and private funds to serve meals in soup kitchens--usually once a day, from one to seven days a week--and distribute unprepared food in food pantries.

To date, there has been little information about whether conventional benefit programs and emergency food programs serve the same or different populations or about the characteristics of those who use soup kitchens and food pantries. Do kitchen and pantry users receive Food Stamps (FS), public assistance (PA), Social Security (SS) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and augment these benefits with free food or do they use ancillary food services because they receive no conventional benefits. If they receive no conventional benefits, why not?

II. METHOD

This study addressed these questions by interviewing a representative sample of soup kitchen and food pantry users. It noted and compared their characteristics, ascertained the degree to which they receive conventional benefits, and determined the reasons why benefits were not used. Five soup kitchens and seven food pantries in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens were selected to reflect the diversity among facilities which had been observed during a one-day pilot study. In all, 296 soup kitchen clients and 147 food pantry clients of those 12 facilities were randomly selected from those seeking food and were interviewed during the first week of April 1985. The respondents' reports of whether or not they received benefits and what benefits they received were subsequently checked against HRA records and found to be in agreement in over 95 percent of the cases.

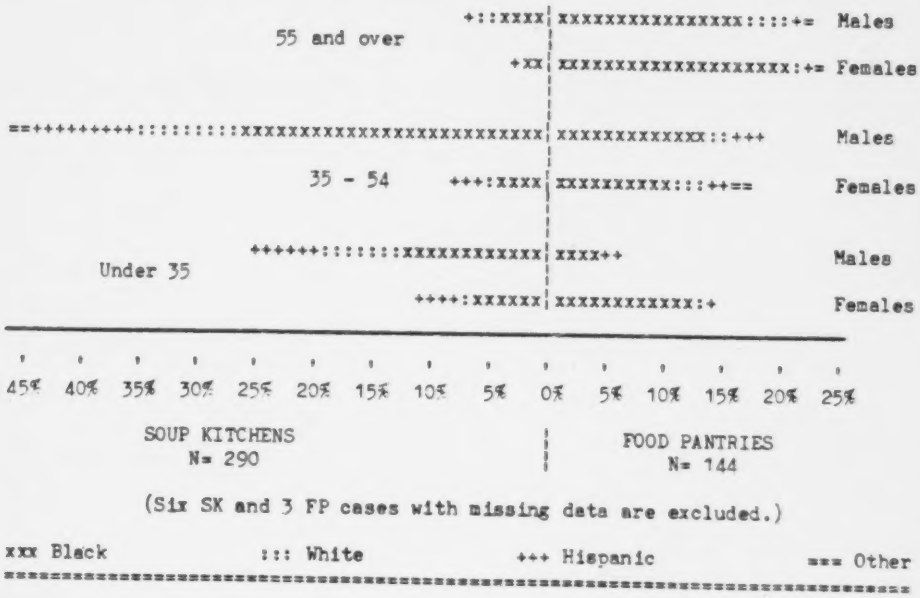
III. FINDINGS

A. Characteristics of soup kitchen and food pantry users

The characteristics of the facilities sampled were too variable to portray a "typical" New York City soup kitchen or food pantry. However, the diversity and size of the sample permit a reliable estimate of the characteristics of the users of the kitchens and pantries.

The age, sex, and ethnic composition of kitchen and pantry user populations is summarized in Figure 1. Since the two types of facilities provide food at different stages of preparation, it is not surprising that they serve rather

Figure 1
PERCENT OF SOUP KITCHEN AND FOOD PANTRY SAMPLES BY AGE, SEX AND ETHNIC GROUP



different populations. Soup kitchen users are over three-quarters male, mostly under 55 years old, and disproportionately white and Hispanic. Food pantry users are more evenly distributed by age and sex, with females predominating below the age of 35. More than three-quarters of food pantry users are black.

Survey findings indicate that recent migrants to New York make up a small proportion of kitchen and pantry users. Just 6.4 percent of kitchen users and 3.4 percent of pantry users stated that they had been in the City for less than two years.

B. Differences between soup kitchen and food pantry users

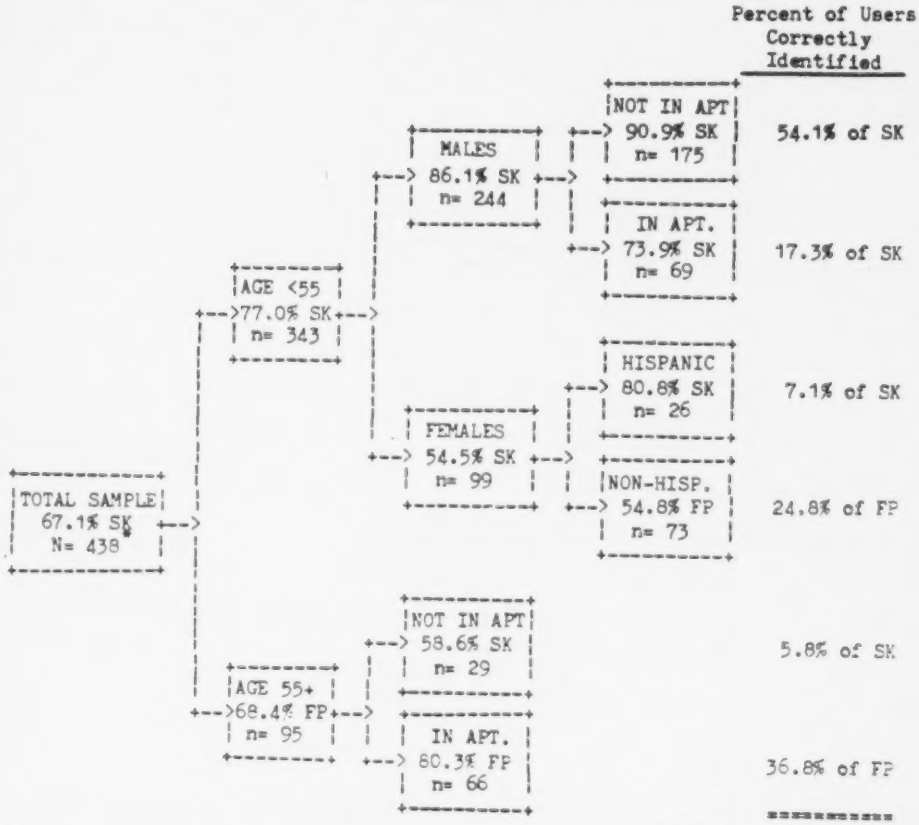
The following statistically significant differences between soup kitchen and food pantry users were observed:

- o Sex: females are more likely to use pantries;
- o Age: pantry users are older;
- o Ethnicity: Hispanics disproportionately use kitchens, whereas blacks are more likely to use pantries;
- o Housing Type: apartment dwellers are more likely to use pantries and persons in less permanent types of housing are more often found at kitchens;
- o Living Arrangements: persons living alone tend to go to kitchens, whereas those living with children (with or without another adult) are overrepresented at pantries;
- o Income Source: Social Security recipients are more likely to use pantries compared with those reporting no income, who disproportionately frequent kitchens;
- o Recency of Public Assistance Contact: persons reporting that they received public assistance during the past year (but not at present) are more likely to use kitchens; those reporting that they never received public assistance are more likely to use pantries.

To distinguish those characteristics that are important in their own right from those that are simply substitutes for more powerful discriminating characteristics, a multivariate analysis was performed in which each characteristic was examined, while controlling for all the others. The results of this analy-

sis are displayed as Figure 2 and show that age, housing type, sex, and ethnicity optimally differentiate soup kitchen from food pantry users.[1] The six

Figure 2
CHARACTERISTICS DIFFERENTIATING SOUP KITCHEN FROM FOOD PANTRY USERS



* Five subjects with missing data are excluded.

[1] Moving from left to right in Figure 2, users are classified according to additional characteristics. Percentages in each box indicate the probability of SK or FP use for the group with that particular characteristic (e.g., Males) plus those characteristics to its left (e.g., age under 55). The right-most column indicates the percentages of SK or FP users in each of the final six groups. A sample reading of Figure 2 is that males under 55, not living in apartments or their own houses, make up 54.1 percent of all SK users and have a 90.9 percent probability of using a SK rather than a FP.

groups at the right (the end of the "tree") correctly classify 84 percent of the kitchen users and 65 percent of the pantry users; overall, the model explains 30 percent of the variance in the use of kitchens and pantries. It is noteworthy that although age differentiates all subjects, housing type does not help predict kitchen or pantry use for females under age 55, who are better differentiated by whether or not they are Hispanic. Furthermore, sex differentiates only those subjects under age 55.

As expected, some characteristics that by themselves significantly differentiated users of the two types of facilities were found to be relatively unimportant when other characteristics were controlled. Income source and with whom a client lives, for example, did not enter the model. Furthermore, although it was expected that living with children would promote kitchen use, and despite the presence of a univariate association, ethnicity is more important for differentiating kitchen or pantry use by females under 55 than is living with children. Figure 2 shows that 80.8 percent of Hispanic women under 55 used kitchens while only 45.2 percent of non-Hispanic women did (54.8 percent used pantries). For women with and without children in the household, the corresponding percentages using kitchens are 52.6 and 57.1 percent. Finally, receipt of conventional benefits, including Food Stamps, did not differentiate these user groups.[2]

C. Income sources and housing status of soup kitchen and food pantry users

This study was designed to address the major policy question of whether kitchen and pantry users receive conventional benefits (public assistance, SSI and Social Security) or whether they represent another, perhaps more transient population not reached by these programs. This section addresses this issue by

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[2] A caution is in order here. Generalization from these results is limited by the representativeness and size of the sample obtained, and a model based on a different mix of facilities might yield different results.

providing data on the sources of income and housing status (in response to a question about where respondents spent the previous night) reported by kitchen and pantry users.

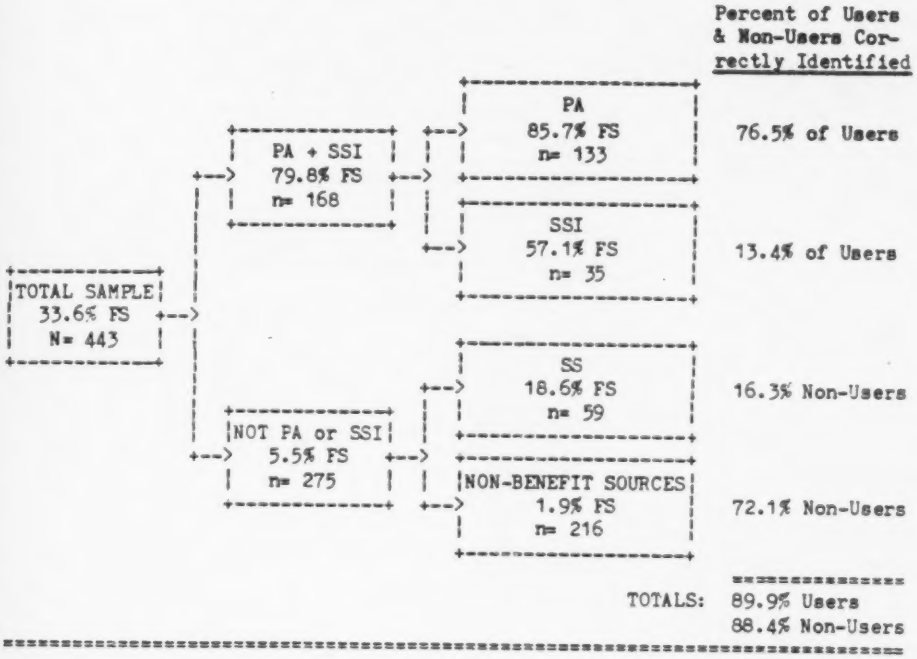
Food Stamps were not considered in the classification of respondents according to income source, so that Food Stamp use could be examined separately for each category of income source. It was also necessary to employ a counting convention to classify the 39 persons (8.8 percent of the sample) who reported multiple income sources aside from Food Stamps (see Appendix Table 1). Income source category assignment was made in the following order: Public Assistance, SSI, Social Security, Earned Income (wages, odd jobs, unemployment insurance, etc.), and Other Sources (e.g., savings and money from friends or relatives). (For example, if SSI and other income were reported, the respondent was assigned to the SSI group.)

About half (51.2 percent) of the sample reported receiving conventional benefits, but participation is significantly different for the users of the two types of facilities. Only 45.9 percent of soup kitchen users receive public assistance, SSI or Social Security, whereas 61.9 percent of food pantry users receive such benefits. The users of kitchens and pantries also received significantly different types of benefits. Pantry users are almost three times as likely to receive Social Security and SSI as are kitchen users (38.1 versus 12.8 percent). Kitchen users are also about 2.5 times as likely to report no income as are pantry users (31.8 versus 12.9 percent).

Figure 3 shows Food Stamp utilization among those receiving public assistance, Social Security and SSI. What is not apparent, however, is that public assistance recipients using kitchens use Food Stamps at a significantly higher rate (89.8 percent) than do those using pantries (73.5 percent). Food Stamp use among the remaining income source groups is uniformly low and is not

significantly different for pantry and kitchen users: 2.5 percent for those with Earned Income, 4.5 percent for those reporting Other Income, and 0.9 percent for the No Income group.

Figure 3
CHARACTERISTICS PREDICTING FOOD STAMP UTILIZATION



The multivariate analysis depicted in Figure 3 explains 61.5 percent of the variance in Food Stamp use in terms of income source alone. That no demographic or life style variable adds significant explanatory power to the model attests to the strong association between the receipt of conventional benefits and Food Stamp use that derives from the benefit application process itself. The model also reveals that about 14 percent of public assistance recipients and 43 percent of SSI beneficiaries may represent target populations for Food

Stamp outreach efforts, since they report not using Food Stamps, but are presumably eligible.

The major housing difference between soup kitchen and food pantry users is that pantry users are twice as likely to live in their own apartments or houses (see Figure 4). For pantry users, conventional benefits and earned income are the dominant income sources. In contrast, kitchen users include the bulk of the homeless (those staying in shelters or public places); homeless users are found mostly in the No Income and Earned Income (e.g., panhandling) groups.

Public assistance recipients (who are slightly more numerous) and those with No Income make up almost two-thirds of kitchen users. However, respondents receiving public assistance are considerably less likely to have spent

Figure 4
PERCENT OF SOUP KITCHEN AND FOOD PANTRY SAMPLES
BY INCOME SOURCE AND HOUSING TYPE

(Two FP cases with missing data are excluded.)

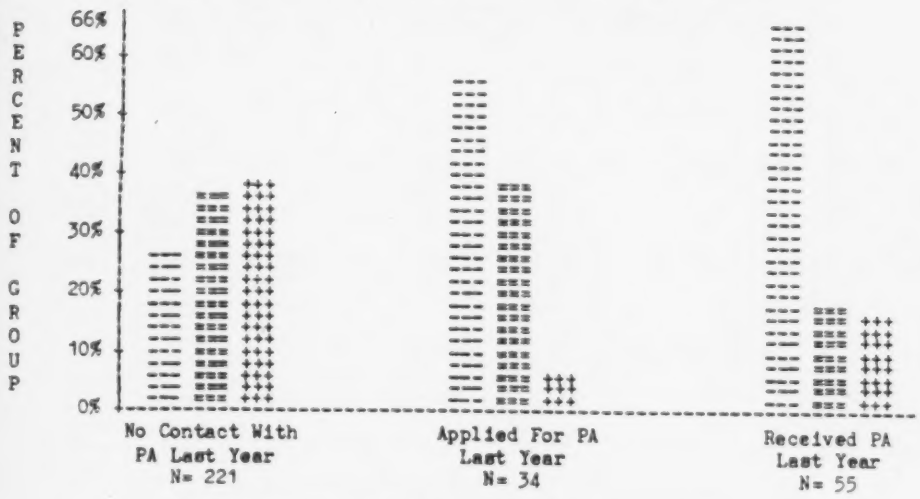
A= Apartment/House R= Rented Room/Hotel S= Shelter P= Public Place

the previous night in a shelter or public place than are those reporting no income. Figure 4 displays the complete pattern of kitchen and pantry use by income source and housing type.

D. Previous contact with public assistance

Because less than one-third of the respondents reported current use of public assistance, it was important to determine what proportion of those not receiving public assistance had applied for or received public assistance during the recent past. Figure 5 shows that of the 310 respondents not reporting current receipt of public assistance, 55 (17.7 percent) applied for but did not

Figure 5
PERCENT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CONTACT GROUPS BY SELECTED INCOME SOURCES FOR NON-PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS



receive public assistance during the previous year, while 221 (71.3 percent) had no contact with public assistance during the previous year. Thus, almost a third (30.0 percent) of all soup kitchen and food pantry users are current public assistance recipients, half (49.9 percent) had no current or recent contact with public assistance, and one-fifth (20.1 percent) had their applications for public assistance rejected during the year preceding the survey.

Of the group which received public assistance last year, 16.4 percent reported receiving other conventional benefits (Social Security and SSI) at the time of the survey and therefore were not in need of public assistance. An additional 18.2 percent reported non-benefit income, mostly composed of irregular odd jobs and panhandling (10.9 percent) and unearned income (7.3 percent). It is worth noting, however, that 65.5 percent of this group reported no income at the time of the survey.

Like the respondents who received public assistance during the last year, the majority (55.9 percent) of the 34 respondents who applied for but did not receive it during that time period also reported no income at the time of the survey. The chief difference between the income distribution of those who received public assistance during the previous year and those who applied for but did not receive it is the greater proportion of unsuccessful applicants (38.2 percent) who reported receiving non-benefit income at the time of the survey.

Although 26.2 percent of respondents without recent contact with public assistance reported no income, two-thirds of this group did report non-benefit and conventional benefit income. At the same time, the majority of those reporting no income (51.3 percent) also reported no contact with public assistance in the previous year; however, a larger proportion of the No Contact group than of either applicants or former recipients reported some income.

The decreasing percentage of respondents in the No Income category as the degree of contact with public assistance diminishes suggests that lessened public assistance contact is associated with greater access to alternate income sources.

E. Reasons for non-use of public assistance and Food Stamps

Respondents were specifically questioned about their lack of participation in public assistance and Food Stamp programs. The reasons they reported for not receiving public assistance and Food Stamps are presented by their degree of contact with these programs in Appendix Tables 2 and 3. The reasons given for non-use of these programs differ little among those who received these benefits last year, those who did not receive but applied for one or both of them, and those who neither received nor applied for them. Thus, Appendix Table 4 collapses reasons for non-participation across degree of program contact.

Actual or perceived ineligibility accounts for nearly half the reasons for nonparticipation in each program; lack of desire accounts for an additional quarter. Lack of knowledge about Food Stamps accounts for about one-tenth of the reasons for non-participation in that program, while about the same proportion reported non-compliance as the reason for non-use of public assistance. It was not always clear that clients were necessarily responsible for these failures to comply.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The principal question addressed by this study was whether soup kitchens and food pantries are providing a supplemental benefit to persons already enrolled in conventional benefit programs or are serving eligible persons who,

for whatever reason, are not receiving conventional benefits. The answer is that they do both. However, the entire sample includes twice as many persons in conventional benefit programs as persons receiving no income. Food pantry users are almost five times as likely to be receiving benefits as to have no income. (While benefit recipients and persons with no income total about three-quarters of the user population, these facilities also serve persons drawing on miscellaneous sources of income such as wages, odd jobs, unemployment insurance, and contributions from friends and relatives.,

While users of conventional benefits are present in both the soup kitchen and food pantry populations, the overview of conventional benefit receipt masks potentially important differences between users of the two types of facilities. For example, the population served by the sample of soup kitchens appears to overlap considerably with that served by HRA's facilities for the homeless, while the population served by the food pantries does not; 31.1 percent of kitchen users spent the previous night in a shelter or public place while only 5.5 percent of pantry users did so.

The Food Stamp program is the institutionalized mechanism for addressing the nutritional requirements of the needy, and use of Food Stamps is quite prevalent (85.0 percent) among the public assistance recipients in this study. However, users of other benefit programs like SSI and Social Security have lower rates of Food Stamp use, 52.1 percent and 18.6 percent, respectively.

These findings raise questions as to why (or whether) recipients of conventional benefits "need" to use soup kitchens and food pantries and why Food Stamp use is not more prevalent among participants in conventional programs, particularly SSI. They further suggest a potential for increasing the use of Food Stamps among subgroups of conventional benefit recipients who currently underutilize them.

APPENDIX

Table 1
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY INCOME SOURCES

INCOME SOURCE CATEGORY	Additional Sources	Number	Percent of Sample
PA		133	29.9
	No Other Sources	15	3.4
	FS	109	24.6
	SSI + FS	2	0.5
	SS	1	0.2
	Wages	1	0.2
	Wages + FS	1	0.2
	Odd Jobs + FS	1	0.2
	Pension	1	0.2
	Money from Friend or Relative	1	0.2
	Money from Friend or Relative + FS	1	0.2
SSI		35	8.0
	No Other Sources	8	1.8
	FS	14	3.2
	SS	4	0.9
	SS + FS	4	0.9
	Wages	2	0.5
	Wages + FS	2	0.5
	Money from Friend or Relative	1	0.2
SS		59	13.2
	No Other Sources	36	8.1
	FS	9	2.0
	Wages + FS	1	0.2
	Wages + Odd Jobs	1	0.2
	Odd Jobs + FS	1	0.2
	Pension	10	2.3
	Money from Friend or Relative	1	0.2
EARNED INCOME		81	18.3
	Wages	35	7.9
	Wages + FS	1	0.2
	Wages + Unemployment Benefits	1	0.2
	Wages + Money from Friend or Relative	2	0.5
	Unemployment Benefits	11	2.5
	Unemployment Benefits + FS	1	0.2
	Odd Jobs	30	6.8
OTHER INCOME		22	4.9
	Money from Friend or Relative	12	2.7
	Pension	7	1.6
	Pension + FS	1	0.2
	Investments	1	0.2
	Disability Benefits	1	0.2
NO INCOME		113	25.5
	No FS	112	25.3
	FS	1	0.2
TOTAL		443	100.0

Table 2

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SAMPLE BY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS AND REASONS FOR NON-RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL SAMPLE	443	100.0						
I. PA Contact Status Unknown	4	0.9						
II. Currently Receiving PA	133	30.0						
III. Not Currently Receiving PA	306	69.1	---->306	100.0				
A. Received PA During Past Year			55	18.0	----> 55	99.9		
Reasons no longer on PA:								
Told or believe ineligible					18	32.7		
Didn't keep appointment					14	25.5		
"Case was closed"					12	21.8		
Refused PWP					8	14.5		
Don't know why					2	3.6		
Refused					1	1.8		
B. Didn't Receive PA During Past Year			251	82.0	---->251	100.0		
a. Applied for PA during the past year					34	13.5	----> 34	100.0
Reason not on PA:								
No ID or residence							11	32.4
Told or believe ineligible							8	23.5
Awaiting response							7	20.6
IM gave no reason							4	11.8
Didn't keep appointment							2	5.9
Too much hassle							1	2.9
Spouse Works							1	2.9
b. Didn't apply for PA during past year					217	86.5	---->217	100.1
Reason didn't apply for PA:								
Told or believe ineligible							75	34.6
Didn't need it							42	19.4
No ID or residence							25	11.5
Don't want it							22	10.1
Too much hassle							16	7.4
Working now							16	7.4
Refused and not asked							14	6.5
Don't know how to apply							5	2.3
Handicapped (can't get to IM office)							2	0.9

Table 3

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SAMPLE BY FOOD STAMP AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS AND REASONS FOR NON-RECEIPT OF FOOD STAMPS

	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL SAMPLE	443	100.0						
I. FS application status unknown*	104	23.5						
II. Currently receiving FS	149	33.6						
III. Not currently receiving FS	190	42.9---->	190	100.0				
A. Currently Receiving PA			11	5.8---->	11	100.1		
Reasons not getting FS:								
Told or believe ineligible					4	36.4		
Awaiting response					4	36.4		
No ID or residence					1	9.1		
No cooking facilities at residence					1	9.1		
Unknown					1	9.1		
B. Not currently receiving PA			179	94.2---->	179	100.0		
a. Applied for FS during the past year					48	26.8---->	48	100.0
Reason not receiving FS:								
Awaiting response							12	25.0
Told or believe ineligible							12	25.0
No ID or residence							6	12.5
IM gave no reason							5	10.4
Didn't keep appointment							5	10.4
Too much hassle							5	10.4
Unknown-N/A							3	6.3
b. Didn't apply for FS during the last year					131	73.2---->	131	100.2
Reason didn't apply for FS:								
Told or believe ineligible							31	23.7
No ID or residence							23	17.6
Don't want them							22	16.8
Didn't need them							17	13.0
Don't know how to apply							15	11.5
Too much hassle							9	6.9
Working now							8	6.1
Unknown							4	3.1
Handicapped (can't get to IM office)							2	1.5

*Questions on reasons for food stamp non-use were not asked on first two survey days.

Table 4
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS

REASONS	FS REASONS Number	FS REASONS Percent	PA REASONS Number	PA REASONS Percent	ALL REASONS Number	ALL REASONS Percent
TOTAL RESPONSES	190	100.0	305	100.0	495	100.0
ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED INELIGIBILITY	85	44.7	154	50.3	239	48.2
Told/believe ineligible	47	24.7	101	33.0	148	29.8
No ID or residence	30	15.8	36	11.8	66	13.3
Too much income	8	4.2	17	5.6	25	5.0
DON'T DESIRE BENEFITS	53	27.9	81	26.5	134	27.0
Don't need	17	8.9	42	13.7	59	11.9
Don't want	22	11.6	22	7.2	44	8.9
Too much hassle	14	7.4	17	5.6	31	6.3
COMPLIANCE FAILURE	5	2.6	36	11.8	41	8.3
Didn't keep appointment	5	2.6	16	5.2	21	4.2
"Case closed"	0	0.0	12	3.9	12	2.4
Refused program (e.g. PWP)	0	0.0	8	2.6	8	1.6
LACK OF KNOWLEDGE	20	10.5	11	3.6	31	6.3
Don't know why not receiving benefits	5	2.6	6	2.0	11	2.2
Don't know rules or how to apply for benefits	15	7.9	5	1.6	20	4.0
MISCELLANEOUS	27	14.2	24	7.8	51	10.3
Applied--waiting	16	8.4	7	2.3	23	4.6
Handicapped	2	1.1	2	0.7	4	0.8
No cooking facilities	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.2
Refused	8	4.2	15	4.9	23	4.6

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DORCAS R. HARDY, COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON HOW THE SOCIAL SECURITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) PROGRAMS RELATE TO THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED HOMELESS. MY STATEMENT DESCRIBES WHAT SSA IS DOING TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESSNESS BY ENSURING MAXIMUM ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN ITS PROGRAMS.

HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS MUST MEET THE SAME ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AS ANY OTHER APPLICANT FOR SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI BENEFITS. IF THEY BECOME ENTITLED UNDER THESE BENEFIT PROGRAMS, THEY CAN BE PROVIDED WITH CASH TO MEET THEIR IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR FOOD, CLOTHING, AND SHELTER. IN THE LONG TERM, THESE PROGRAMS, BY PROVIDING BENEFITS THAT CAN BE COUNTED ON, HELP INDIVIDUALS OR AGENCIES ACTING ON THEIR BEHALF TO OBTAIN PERMANENT HOUSING AND MEET THEIR OTHER BASIC NEEDS.

Initiatives to Accommodate the Homeless

To assure that homeless individuals who may be eligible for benefits under SSA's programs receive them, SSA has established an operational plan for serving the homeless. SSA's 10 regional offices and its more than 1,300 field offices are required to carry out specific initiatives to assure that the homeless receive information about the SSI and Social Security programs and any benefits to which they may be entitled. These initiatives, which I discuss below, recognize the special difficulties of the homeless in complying with the process by which SSA normally provides information about its programs and handles applications, claims processing, and check delivery. The idea is to ensure that the process is more flexible. The needs of the homeless or about-to-be homeless are different from the mainstream population in this regard and even different from community to community.

Being homeless in no way prevents a person from being entitled to Social Security or SSI benefits. There are three primary

REASONS WHY HOMELESS PEOPLE, AND SSA, HAVE PROBLEMS IN ESTABLISHING THE ENTITLEMENT OF THE HOMELESS TO BENEFITS:

1. HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE DIFFICULT TO LOCATE AND CONTACT;

2. THEY HAVE LIMITED EXPOSURE TO TRADITIONAL NEWS SOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE BENEFIT-PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE; AND

3. THEY SOMETIMES DON'T KNOW HOW TO FILE, OR ARE RELUCTANT TO FILE OR PURSUE, A CLAIM FOR BENEFITS.

SSA RECOGNIZES THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE HOMELESS. SSA'S INITIATIVES ARE DESIGNED TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A CONNECTION BETWEEN ITS BENEFIT PROGRAMS AND THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE.

ESTABLISHING ENTITLEMENT

AS PART OF OUR OUTREACH INITIATIVE SSA WORKERS ARE SENT TO SHELTERS, SOUP KITCHENS AND OTHER LOCATIONS TO TAKE APPLICATIONS FROM THE HOMELESS AND TO FOLLOW UP ON CLAIMS AS NECESSARY. SSA

WORKERS ASK THE PEOPLE WHO ADMINISTER THESE FACILITIES TO HELP KEEP TRACK OF THE APPLICANTS SO THAT ANY ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE NEEDED TO ESTABLISH ENTITLEMENT CAN BE OBTAINED. THIS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION WITH FACILITY ADMINISTRATORS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN GETTING THE MEDICAL EVIDENCE NECESSARY IN CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY BENEFITS.

DELIVERING BENEFITS AND NOTICES

WHEN A HOMELESS PERSON'S ENTITLEMENT TO BENEFITS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, SSA CAN MAKE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELIVERING BENEFITS AND NOTICES. BENEFITS CAN BE SENT TO A SHELTER OR INTERESTED THIRD PARTY, DELIVERED TO A POST OFFICE FOR GENERAL DELIVERY, OR SENT TO A SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE FOR PICKUP. IF AN INDIVIDUAL HAS A BANK ACCOUNT, DIRECT DEPOSIT OF THE BENEFITS IS ENCOURAGED. WHEN AN ELIGIBLE, HOMELESS PERSON IS UNABLE TO HANDLE HIS FINANCES, A BENEFIT CAN BE PAID ON HIS BEHALF TO A RELATIVE, FRIEND, SHELTER OR ORGANIZATION.

Emergency Advance Payments

SSA provides funds to SSI applicants in emergency situations by a process called emergency advance payments. The process is limited to individuals who can be presumed eligible for benefits although a final determination of eligibility for benefits has not been made.

Immediate Payments

Beginning October 1, 1985, Social Security offices started using a new procedure to make immediate payments in both the Social Security and SSI programs for people in particular need. "Immediate" usually means while the beneficiary waits, or the next day at the latest. The payments are made from the offices' petty cash funds and are limited to a maximum of $200 or the total benefit due, whichever is less, in any 30-day period. If the benefit due exceeds $200, any remaining amounts are paid through the normal process on an expedited basis. These payments are only available to those already determined eligible.

TO RECEIVE AN IMMEDIATE PAYMENT, THE BENEFICIARY'S SITUATION MUST BE SUCH THAT ANY FURTHER DELAY IN PAYMENT WOULD RESULT IN DEPRIVATION OF FOOD AND/OR SHELTER OR ENDANGERMENT OF HEALTH. THE PERSON'S ENTITLEMENT TO BENEFITS MUST BE VERIFIED BY THE LOCAL OFFICE. MANY HOMELESS OR ABOUT-TO-BE-HOMELESS PEOPLE MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS AND CAN BE HELPED WITH THIS PROCEDURE IF THEY ARE FOUND ELIGIBLE FOR EITHER SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI BENEFITS.

INTERIM ASSISTANCE REIMBURSEMENT

IN ADDITION, SSA WORKS WITH STATES TO PROVIDE INTERIM ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS WHEN SSI BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY IS PENDING. UNDER THIS LAW, AMOUNTS CAN BE PAID TO THE INDIVIDUAL BY THE STATE; THE STATE IS THEN REIMBURSED FROM THE BENEFITS LATER AUTHORIZED FOR THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME THAT THE STATE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE. THIS PROCESS HELPS ASSURE ASSISTANCE TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHILE SSA MAKES AN ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION.

Benefits for Emergency Shelter Residents

Homeless people may rely on assistance from charitable organizations to help meet their needs for food, clothing and shelter. The SSI program excludes such in-kind assistance as income in determining eligibility and the amount of the benefit that can be paid. In addition, under an exception to the general prohibition of SSI eligibility for residents of public institutions, residents of public emergency shelters for the homeless may be eligible for up to 3 months in any 12-month period. This exception was added by legislation enacted in 1983 and is intended to provide income so individuals will be able to move to more permanent living arrangements.

Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act

The recent enactment of P.L. 99-570, with its title XI Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act, is serving as a focal point for SSA to emphasize activities directed at making sure that

WE REACH THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS. THE ACT REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH SSA'S PROGRAMS:

-- THE SECRETARY OF HHS IS TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS TO APPLY FOR SSI BENEFITS PRIOR TO DISCHARGE OR RELEASE FROM A PUBLIC INSTITUTION.

-- THE SECRETARIES OF HHS AND AGRICULTURE ARE TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL WHOSE ELIGIBILITY FOR SSI IS BEING HANDLED UNDER A PRERELEASE PROGRAM MAY APPLY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SSI AND FOOD STAMP PROGRAM WITH A SINGLE APPLICATION.

-- THE SECRETARY OF HHS IS TO PROVIDE A METHOD OF MAKING SSI PAYMENTS TO AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL WHO DOES NOT RESIDE IN A PERMANENT DWELLING OR DOES NOT HAVE A FIXED HOME OR MAILING ADDRESS.

ACCORDINGLY, OUR FIELD OFFICES WILL RENEW EFFORTS TO MAKE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AWARE OF THE ADVANTAGE OF ENTERING INTO

PRERELEASE AGREEMENTS IN ORDER TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE RELEASED INTO THE COMMUNITY. THESE AGREEMENTS HELP SSA TO LOCATE INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI BEFORE THEY ARE RELEASED, THUS HELPING TO AVOID A GAP IN ASSISTANCE WHILE ELIGIBILITY IS BEING DETERMINED. SINCE 1978 OUR OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS HAVE SPECIFIED PROCEDURES FOR TAKING SSI APPLICATIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS BEFORE THEIR RELEASE FROM INSTITUTIONS. THE SUCCESS OF THESE PROCEDURES IS, OF COURSE, DEPENDENT ON THE COOPERATION OF THE INSTITUTIONS BOTH PRIOR TO OUR TAKING AN APPLICATION AND DURING THE ADJUDICATION OF THE CLAIM, SINCE THEY ARE OFTEN THE PRIMARY PROVIDERS OF MEDICAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE INDIVIDUAL.

WE WILL CONTINUE THE OUTREACH INITIATIVES MENTIONED ABOVE OF SENDING WORKERS TO SHELTERS AND SOUP KITCHENS TO TAKE APPLICATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ON CLAIMS. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO ASK PEOPLE WHO ADMINISTER THESE FACILITIES TO HELP KEEP TRACK OF THE APPLICANTS IN THE HOPE OF OBTAINING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE

APPLICANTS AS NEEDED. IN ADDITION, WE ARE REEXAMINING OUR CHECK DELIVERY PROCEDURES FOR MAKING SOCIAL SECURITY AND SSI PAYMENTS TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT RESIDE IN PERMANENT DWELLINGS OR WHO DO NOT HAVE FIXED HOME OR MAILING ADDRESSES.

SSA OFFICES KEEP A SUPPLY OF FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI APPLICANTS WHO VISIT OUR OFFICES. ALSO WE INQUIRE, AS PART OF THE SSI APPLICATION PROCESS, WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL IS RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS. IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING THEM AND LIVES IN A HOUSEHOLD THAT IS MADE UP ENTIRELY OF SSI RECIPIENTS, AN APPLICATION FOR FOOD STAMPS IS COMPLETED. THIS PROCESS OF TAKING FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS AT THE TIME OF TAKING SSI APPLICATIONS IS NOW BEING EXTENDED TO INDIVIDUALS AWAITING RELEASE FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS SO THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO TAKE ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS.

WORK ON A COMBINED SSI/FOOD STAMP APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUALS AWAITING RELEASE FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IS PROGRESSING. SSA HAS

ASKED THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, TO EVALUATE THE INFORMATION REQUIRED ON THE SSI FORM AND DETERMINE WHAT, IF ANY, SUPPLEMENTAL DATA WOULD BE NEEDED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

IN ADDITION TO ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES, SSA HAS PURSUED OTHER OPTIONS IN THIS AREA. WE HAVE MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES AND THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL IN AN EFFORT TO ASSIST THEM IN PREPARING INFORMATION TAILORED TO THEIR AFFILIATES AND MEMBERS. OUR EXTERNAL LIAISON STAFF HAS ALSO MADE PRESENTATIONS AT FORUMS AND CONFERENCES SPONSORED BY ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH THE HOMELESS, PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT SSA'S POLICIES AND OPERATIONS AND MAKING THE ORGANIZATIONS' INTERESTS AND CONCERNS KNOWN SO THAT THEY CAN BE CONSIDERED DURING SSA'S DECISIONMAKING PROCESS.

WE ARE COOPERATING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IN ITS JOBS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAM. LOCAL SSA REPRESENTATIVES ARE SERVING ON WORKING COMMMITTEES WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION IN 10 CITIES WHERE THE PROGRAM IS GETTING STARTED. SSA'S ROLE IS TO ENSURE THAT ANY OF THE PROGRAM'S PARTICIPANTS THAT MIGHT HAVE EITHER SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI ELIGIBILITY GET ANY ASSISTANCE NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR BENEFITS UNDER OUR PROGRAMS.

ANOTHER SUCH EFFORT IS OUR COOPERATION WITH THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION IN TWO OF ITS PROJECTS FOR HOMELESS AND CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE. LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES HAVE WORKED WITH THE FOUNDATION'S NETWORK OF MEDICAL FACILITIES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO HOMELESS PEOPLE. WE HAVE ALSO SERVED IN AN ADVISORY ROLE IN THE FOUNDATION'S UPCOMING PROJECT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN WHICH AN INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF HEALTH CARE, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND HOUSING OPTIONS ARE PROVIDED TO HELP THE CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL FUNCTION

MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE COMMUNITY. WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPLORING WAYS TO WORK WITH THE GRANTEES IN THE NINE CITIES SELECTED FOR THE PROJECT.

CONCLUSION

I WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM SSA'S CONCERN FOR ASSURING THAT HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS BE MADE AWARE OF OUR PROGRAMS AND BE ASSISTED TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE IN APPLYING FOR BENEFITS. SSA HAS HISTORICALLY MADE THE EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF THIS SPECIAL SEGMENT OF THE AMERICAN POPULATION, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY EFFORTS TO PROVIDE THE BEST SERVICE POSSIBLE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21235

April 24, 1987

The Honorable Mickey Leland
Chairman, Select Committee
on Hunger
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed are the responses you requested to followup questions relating to my written testimony for the Select Committee on Hunger's February 25 hearing on "Hunger and Homelessness."

Thank you again for allowing me to comment on the Social Security Administration's efforts to address the short- and long-term needs of the elderly and disabled homeless.

Sincerely,

Dorcas R. Hardy

Dorcas R. Hardy
Commissioner
of Social Security

Enclosure

FOLLOWUP QUESTIONS FROM THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
FEBRUARY 25, 1987, HEARING ON "HUNGER AND THE HOMELESS"

Question 1: A study of homeless people in the "skid row" area of Los Angeles (Farr & Koegel, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, March 1986) using a representative sample of the entire homeless population, found that a little more than 8 percent were currently receiving any disability benefits (SSDI, SSI, VA, California DI, or other). What is your estimate of the number (or percent) of homeless people nationwide who could be receiving SSI benefits on the basis of disability or SSDI benefits if they applied and persevered through the disability determination process?

Answer: SSA does not have valid statistical data on which to base an estimate concerning the homeless as a group. Current information on the homeless indicates that the stereotype of the homeless as males with mental or substance abuse problems is both inappropriate and misleading. Thus, many among the current homeless may not be in any way physically or mentally impaired.

The current rate of allowance among the general population who believe themselves disabled and accordingly file for benefits is about 40 percent. There is no way for us to project the potential rate of allowance among the homeless because we do not know how many believe themselves disabled and might file for benefits. Empirically, we would think that the allowance rate for the mentally ill component of the homeless population filing applications would be higher than the national allowance rate. Our experience in the New York City project would tend to bear this out. (See answer to question number 10.)

Question 2: You state that the Social Security Administration has had a "pre-release" approval procedure for SSI eligibility determination of institutionalized persons in effect since 1978. It is our understanding from local mental health advocates that the program has not worked well. Would you please comment on this assertion including in your remarks any obstacles you have identified to making it work and what corrective actions have you taken?

Answer: We believe that the prerelease procedures have worked well in some areas but that improvements can be made overall. The procedures require close cooperation between SSA local offices, State disability determination services, and the institutions. The major obstacles to successful use of the procedures fall in the area of communications among these agencies.

The prerelease procedures can only work effectively when SSA offices are notified enough in advance of the patient's planned release to permit medical determination. During this period it is essential that the institutions keep SSA offices informed of the individual's status. Problems arise when SSA is contacted for the first time within a very few days of the individual's discharge or when discharge plans change, but our offices are not notified.

Accordingly, we have taken action to ensure that our field offices renew their efforts to make institutions aware of the advantage of entering into a prerelease agreement in order to prevent homelessness when individuals are released into a community.

Question 3: What is the schedule for implementation of a single application procedure for SSI and food stamp benefits for people who are scheduled for release from public institutions?

Answer: We are working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on development of a single application. We hope to have our joint activity completed by May 1987. However, clearances and production will take until late 1987. In the meantime, we are implementing a process for persons being released from institutions whereby a regular food stamp application will be taken along with the SSI application.

Question 4: The intent of the provision enacted in the drug bill requiring that DHHS and USDA establish a single application procedure for SSI and food stamp benefits for people who are about to be released from public institutions was to assure that these benefits are available on the date of discharge. How are you bridging the substantial difference in processing time between food stamp applications (30 days) and SSI benefits (3 months or more) in order to assure that such individuals have eligibility established for both benefits on the day of release?

Answer: When properly employed the prerelease procedures greatly help in assuring a timely determination of SSI eligibility as well as food stamp eligibility. The food stamp agency may certify eligibility for food stamps once the individual is released from the institution. While the complex nature of SSI eligibility determinations makes it impossible to assure in every case that SSI eligibility can be determined by the date of release, the prerelease procedures offer considerable help in achieving timely determinations. First, the procedures allow SSA to get a headstart by initiating the determination before the patient is released. Second, it provides a source of necessary medical information to determine disability. Thus, it often eliminates time-consuming documentation efforts such as consultative examinations.

Question 5: How many SSI "emergency advance payment" checks were issued last year? What percentage of SSI applicants received such payments?

Answer: SSA issued approximately 700 SSI emergency advance payments in 1986. This represents about one-tenth of 1 percent of applicants in that year who ultimately were eligible for SSI.

Followup: Why has this process not been used more widely for the homeless or persons who have no home and are about to be released from institutions?

Answer: The emergency advance payment procedure is available for the month of application when the applicant is faced with a financial emergency and can be presumed to be eligible although a final determination of eligibility has not been made. As a general rule, this payment is less likely to be used in cases of the kind described in your followup question, because in such cases presumptive disability determinations would need to be made by State disability determination services. It would be more likely to be used in cases where the severity and permanence of impairments are readily observable so that presumptive disability determinations can be made in local Social Security offices, or where the individual was aged 65 or older.

Current law also provides that a claimant applying for SSI on the basis of disability or blindness may receive up to 3 months' payments prior to the determination of the individual's disability or blindness if he or she is presumptively disabled or presumptively blind and otherwise eligible. (See detailed explanation in the answer to question 13.)

Also available for persons with financial hardship is the "immediate payment" process that allows a payment of up to $200 per month. Immediate payments are generally issued in emergency situations to individuals who have already been determined to be eligible but who cannot wait for payment to be made through the automated process. In 1986, SSA offices issued 4,755 immediate payments. Our data do not show how many of these payments went to persons waiting for their first payment versus persons who have been eligible but had their benefits interrupted for some reason. Since emergency advance payments are not permitted except in initial claims, the immediate payment process is much more helpful to homeless persons whose eligibility has already been established.

Question 7: What types of special arrangements have been considered for emergency payments to people with no fixed address? For example, has thought been given to policy which would provide a larger emergency payment to permit them to find housing or a

check each month during the processing period, rather than only a one-time payment?

Answer: "Emergency" or "immediate" payments as described in the answer to question 5 above are issued directly to the individual while he or she is in the local office. Therefore, it is not necessary to make special arrangements for delivery of these payments.

The amount of the emergency advance payment is limited by law (section 1631(a)(4) of the Social Security Act). The Administration proposed to the 99th Congress an increase in the maximum emergency advance payment from $100 to an amount not exceeding the amount of the monthly benefit, including any federally administered State supplementary payments, that would be payable to an eligible individual with no other income. Representative Archer included the proposal in H.R. 3981 in December 1985. The House of Representatives passed such a provision as part of H.R. 5595, but the provision was dropped by the Senate.

As mentioned in the answer to question 5, current law also provides for the payment of full SSI benefits for 3 months prior to a final determination of SSI eligibility for those individuals found to be presumptively disabled or blind.

Immediate payments provide for multiple and larger payments than an emergency advance payment and are of potentially greater help to the homeless after a determination of eligibility has been made.

Finally, many applicants for SSI also receive "interim assistance" from the State or local governments. The interim assistance programs provide cash assistance until the SSI payments begin.

Question 8: Are there procedures in place for accelerating the disability determination process for homeless people?

Answer: Our field office employees are trained to be sensitive to special-needs claimants. One such special-needs claimant is the homeless individual. Because of the hardship under which the homeless exist, we try to give their claims accelerated processing by emphasizing the need to obtain all of the needed information during the initial interview. Arrangements are made to contact the individual at alternative locations, such as soup kitchens, shelters, and social agencies, in case further evidence is required. By having a means to recontact such individuals, we can accelerate the claims process.

Question 9: How do you justify the 3-month limitation on SSI eligibility for residents of public institutions when the homeless of today are often in need of public emergency shelter for longer than 3 months?

Answer: When the SSI program was established, it was decided that the program should not replace the traditional responsibility of State and local government for financing State and local institutions. Since the residents of such an institution would be expected to sign over any source of income in exchange for the care received in the institution, a general provision was included in the SSI law to prohibit SSI payments to residents of public institutions beginning with the first full month of residence.

Recognizing the different role that the public emergency shelter plays for the homeless, Congress added a provision to the Social Security Act Amendments of 1983 which provided an exception to the general prohibition against paying benefits to individuals residing in public institutions. The exception was not intended as a way to subsidize the shelter or provide the resident with funds for support while still in the shelter. The exception was created to allow for the accumulation of funds which would permit shelter staff to make the necessary financial arrangements required to secure permanent housing for the individual.

The SSI cash benefit is provided to needy aged, blind, or disabled individuals to help them meet current basic needs that are not being met from other sources. The program is an income source of last resort. The payment of 3 months' worth of benefits should allow the individual to accumulate funds necessary for his or her transfer to permanent housing and give the staff sufficient time to locate suitable housing. The individual's continuing residence in the shelter beyond the third month raises questions about whether the SSI benefits are needed for his basic needs. Continued eligibility in such situations would not be in keeping with the purpose of the SSI program.

Question 10: You mention that SSA has an outreach initiative directed to the homeless. The Select Committee has a general description from SSA of the New York City outreach project and would like more detailed information. Specifically, we are interested in:

(a) How many applications have been taken for SSI and SSDI in this outreach project?

(b) How many people have actually received benefits as a result of the outreach project?

(c) What is the current status of the project?

Answer: The New York City (NYC) homeless outreach project is continuing. On scheduled dates, a claims representative from SSA, an analyst from the New York State Office of Disability Determinations, a social worker, and physicians and psychiatrists supplied by the NYC Human Resources Administration visit seven shelters to make their various services available to the homeless. The SSA claims representative's job is to take and develop disability claims. To date, 1,549 claims have been processed with approximately a 60-percent allowance rate. The allowance rate is somewhat higher than that for the general population. This may be due to the selectivity of the team participating in the outreach project. One of the unique features of this project is that the physicians that do the consultative examinations for the project are also treating the same individuals on an ongoing basis in their Human Resources Administration role. A tentative agreement was reached with the Human Resources Administration to extend the project to at least one more shelter.

Question 11: Have you replicated the outreach effort in an organized and structured way in other localities? If not, please describe in detail any other local SSA outreach efforts directed to the homeless and how many localities conduct such outreach?

Answer: The materials we furnished to Vivian Gabor of your staff on March 3 and the February 25 statement for the record detail SSA's outreach efforts. The success of the New York City project is due in large part to the willingness of State and local officials to work very closely with SSA.

SSA has made it known that it is ready to participate in similar arrangements with other State, local, and private agencies. The New Jersey State Department of Human Resources has recently contacted SSA for assistance in setting up a pilot program in Jersey City to assist the homeless.

Question 12: Please provide the committee with information on the resources (in both worker-years and dollars) you are currently allocating and the levels you will commit to the effort in response to the President's fiscal year 1988 budget directive, "that more efforts be made to ensure that the homeless have access to entitlement programs."

Answer: Our statement for the record and responses to earlier questions outline the efforts SSA is making to "ensure that the homeless have access to entitlement programs." These efforts have been and will be undertaken with resources currently available to SSA for fiscal year 1987 and with the resources requested for fiscal year 1988. We do not keep separate records of resources committed expressly to the homeless.

Question 13: Please explain in detail what is being done by SSA to expand the categories of presumptive disability to include homeless people with serious mental illness? (Such a presumption could be limited to people who have documentation of inpatient mental treatment in the prior 2 years, or individuals with a diagnosis by a mental health professional of schizophrenia or an affective disorder.)

Answer: Section 1631(a)(4)(B) of the Social Security Act provides that a claimant applying for SSI on the basis of disability or blindness may receive up to 3 months' payments prior to the determination of the individual's disability or blindness if he or she is presumptively disabled (PD) or presumptively blind (PB) and otherwise eligible. In implementing this statutory provision, regulations (20 CFR 416.933) stipulate that a finding of PD or PB can be made if the evidence at the time of the PD or PB decision reflects a high degree of probability that the claimant is disabled or blind.

In the cases of readily observable severe impairments (e.g., amputation of extremities or total blindness), a PD or PB finding can be made by our field offices. Regulations (20 CFR 416.934) list 11 specific impairment categories for which field offices can make PD or PB decisions. Mental impairments such as schizophrenia or an affective disorder are not included in this list, since the severity of these disorders is not always readily observable in the field office setting.

Under present procedures, when a PD decision cannot be made by the field office and the SSI claimant meets the nonmedical criteria for SSI eligibility, the field office sends the claim to the State disability determination service (DDS) and flags it for expedited consideration. In cases of homeless people with serious mental illnesses, as with other serious illnesses, SSA field offices invoke the expedited determination process. A PD decision for severe mental impairments can be made by the DDS if the available evidence (which is short of that needed for a formal determination) demonstrates a high likelihood that disability will be established when complete evidence is obtained.

It should be noted, however, that SSA was experiencing a somewhat higher reversal rate for PD decisions involving mental impairments (i.e., the final decision made after all necessary documentation is received) than for those involving physical impairments. To minimize this reversal rate the DDSs, in considering PD decisions in mental impairment claims, were asked to focus on those situations where there is strong evidence of a severe psychosis or organic mental disorder. This process resulted in the current situation where about 25 percent of all presumptive disability findings are based on mental impairments and the reversal rate is basically the same as that for physical impairments.